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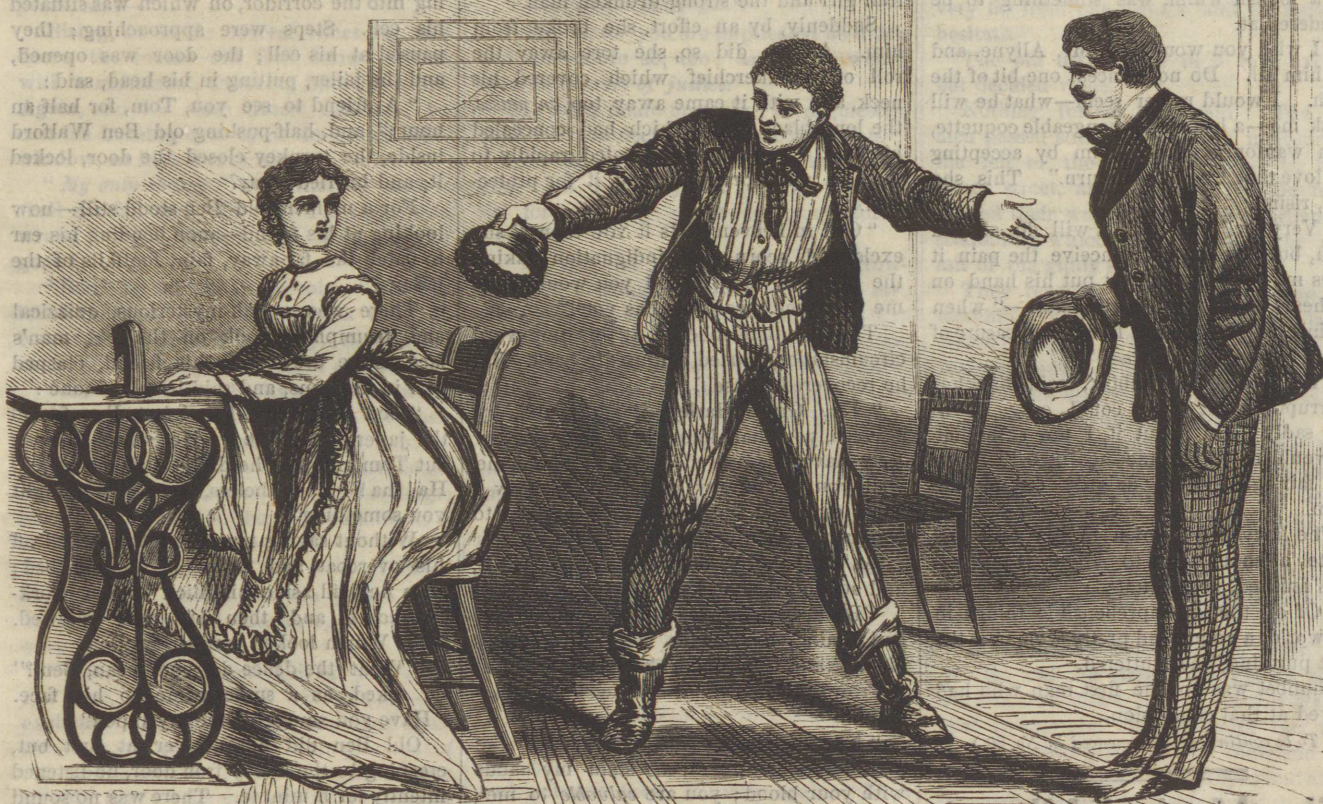
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"CRISIE," HE SAID, WITH A FLOURISH OF HIS GREAT, BRAWNY HAND, "THIS IS MISTER MORDAUNT."

THE SCARLET HAND;

The Orphan Heiress of Fifth Avenue.

NEW YORK HEARTHS AND NEW YORK HOMES.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

Author of "The Ace of Spades," "The Witches of New York," Etc.

CHAPTER VII.—CONTINUED.

LUCKILY for Mordaunt the druggist was also a doctor, and he was at home. To him the suffering man explained his symptoms. Mordaunt, each moment, seemed to be getting worse and worse.

The doctor guessed from the actor's description of his pains the nature of his illness.

First he employed that admirable instrument known as a stomach-pump. Then he prepared a dose of sweet oil, which he made Mordaunt swallow.

"How do you feel now?" he asked, after the actor had taken the oil.

"Oh, much better, the pain is nearly all gone."

"You had a lively shake of it, cap," said Pony, who stood an attentive observer of the scene.

"What could have caused this sudden attack?" Mordaunt asked in wonder.

"You have been drinking to excess lately, have you not?" said the doctor, his experienced eye reading the truth in the haggard face of the actor.

"Yes; but this morning, I have taken nothing but a glass of wine—a single glass only."

"Indeed, only a single glass of wine?" said the doctor, thoughtfully.

"That is all."

"Come this way a moment, please," said the doctor, drawing Mordaunt into the little room at the back of the shop.

"You have not been under the influence of liquor then, to-day?" the doctor asked.

"No," Mordaunt said, in some astonishment at the doctor's question.

"You have not tried to poison yourself, then?"

"No," replied the actor, utterly astonished.

"Why, do you mean to say—"

"That you have been poisoned, yes," said the doctor. "I thought when you came in, and I discovered what the matter was with you, that, in a drunken spree, you had taken poison."

"No, no, it is not so," returned Mordaunt, utterly bewildered at this strange discovery.

"Then you have in some way taken poison. If my guess is right, you have been a very hard drinker."

"Yes, yes."

"That you have drank hard has probably saved your life, for your system being impregnated with the poison of the alcohol, the poison that you have recently taken could not act upon it in its full force. One poison counteracted the other in a measure. But if you had not acted so promptly in coming to me, and applying a remedy, you would have been beyond all earthly aid in an hour."

Then to the mind of Mordaunt came the thought that the poison, that had so nearly taken his life, must have been in the glass of wine that he had drank at the house of Allyne Strathroy.

Why should Allyne Strathroy desire the death of one so powerless as the vagabond actor?

There was but one answer:

Fear!

Fear of what? The body of the murdered man in Baxter street could have answered that!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GIRL THAT RUNS THE SEWING-MACHINE.

MORDAUNT left the druggist's shop with his head filled with confused but horrible ideas. He was firmly convinced that Allyne had poisoned him. He had escaped death by a miracle, and, rising with the crisis, his old manhood reasserted itself, and the now thoroughly aroused man swore that he would devote the rest of his life to unravelling the dread mystery that shrouded the relations which had existed between the person known as James Kidd, who had been murdered in Baxter street, and Allyne Strathroy.

Pony Moore, the street vender, had followed Mordaunt into the street.

"Well, cap, are you all hunky boy, now?" he asked.

"Yes, my good friend," said the actor, feeling a deep sentiment of gratitude toward the man who had taken pity upon his helpless condition.

"Well, now that's just bully. That doctor cuss is just an old blue-bird on a lily-root," as we used to say down South during the war," exclaimed Pony, in admiration.

"Were you in the army?"

"You kin jist go yer pile on that every time. I was a Zou-zou. First Fire Zouaves. No *fou-fous* in that crowd!" replied Pony, with honest pride. "Say, cap, don't know you?" And Pony looked keenly into the face of the actor as he put the question.

"Not to my knowledge," said Mordaunt, unable to remember ever having met his companion before.

"Ain't you an actor? Didn't you play a star engagement at the New Bowery Theatre, one?"

"Yes," said the actor, and back to his memory came the thoughts of bygone years; those years when he was a spoiled favorite of the public, and received hundreds of dollars weekly. He had changed—greatly since that time.

"Edmund Mordaunt, your name, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"I knowed it was you!" cried Pony, in delight. "Whoa, January!" he shouted, as his sagacious animal, seeing him come from the shop, had commenced to move slowly down the street.

"I see'd you play Macbeth for your benefit. Cris and I went into the boxes. Cris is my sister. Say, Mister Mordaunt, you look kinder hard up," said the street vender, casting his eyes upon the shabby suit that the actor wore; "things are rough with you, eh?"

"Yes, but it's my own fault," returned the actor sadly.

"Well, now, I'd jist go my bottom dollar for to see you on top of a stage ag'in. You know how to howl, you do! Why, them fellers nowadays ain't a patch alongside of

the old sports. New York ain't what it used to be. It's all moved up-town or over to Brooklyn, or gone out into Jersey," said Pony, with an air of disgust.

The actor listened to the reflections of the street vender very thoughtfully. Even while the good-hearted fellow was scheming for Mordaunt's stage resurrection, the other was scheming for his own deeper eclipse. That poisoned draught had fired the slumbering lion in his nature, which never before was so fully aroused; and already, even as Pony Moore chattered, the actor had determined upon his plan of action to clear away the mystery that surrounded Allyne Strathroy and his connection with the Baxter street victim Kidd. Some obscure and quiet retreat was requisite; possibly, an active and daring ally. The room in the old Jew's house in Baxter street might answer for the first, but if he could also procure another refuge it would be to his advantage, for Mordaunt now felt sure that he had a powerful and unscrupulous foe to contend with, when he entered the lists with Allyne Strathroy. The ally could be found in the street vender, and perhaps he could direct him to some quiet boarding-house near where he resided.

"You have not told me your name yet," observed Mordaunt.

"Moore—Pony Moore," said the street vender.

"Where do you live?"

"In Rivington street, near the Bowery. It's a tumbledown-looking old shanty on the outside, but pretty as a picture on the inside," said Pony.

"Do you know of a very nice, quiet boarding-house, near you—one cheap, because I'm not over-flush with money?" asked Mordaunt.

For a moment Pony scratched the side of his head reflectively—a sign in him of deep thought.

"Well," he said, at length, "I'll tell you what it is, Mr. Mordaunt, we've got a spare room; 'tain't a very large one, but it's snug, and if you'd like to come an' stop with us—Cris an' I—why, you kin pay jist what you think it's worth."

Eagerly Mordaunt embraced the offer. It suited his purpose admirably.

"Jist git onto the cart an' ride right along," said Pony. "I'm goin' straight home. The folks up here don't know what cheap taters are. You see, my reg'lar beat's on the east side from the Bowery down to the river. But, as I had a lot of taters on hand, I thought I'd skrimish up here. It's a mean beat; they ain't got no rocks."

So Mordaunt and Pony got on the wagon, and, urged by the voice of the street vender, "January" began to make good time homeward, while Pony enlarged upon the good qualities of the sorry-looking steed.

Pony explained to his companion as they rode along that his sister, Crissie Moore, or, as he termed her, Cris—was a shirt-maker for one of the large Broadway firms, but worked at home instead of going to a shop. Pony, evidently, thought a great deal of her.

"She's jist the nicest little gal you ever

did see," he informed his companion, in confidence, as they proceeded down-town. "an' she's jist as smart as they make 'em. Why, a steel-trap's a fool to her. You would never think that she was my sister, for to look at me, 'cos I'm rather a rough and tumble looking cuss, but she's jist as neat as a pink. You ought for to see her when she's fixed up to go to Jones' Wood, or over to Hoboken on a Fourth of July, or some sitch day. She looks jist as gay as a humming-bird. She's a good girl, too," and Pony spoke with pride. "You don't catch her runnin' round the streets with a lot of young fellers. She's jist as much of a lady as any of them painted up gals with hoss-tails on the back of their heads that cut such an awful swell on Broadway. Why, if I should catch Cris dancin' any of that white and red on her face, I'd jist put her head in the water-pail, quicker'n a wink. But, she wouldn't do any sitch thing as that; she knows better, she does!"

"I suppose that she'll be getting married soon," said Mordaunt, merely by way of keeping up the conversation.

"Well, I don't know," said Pony, dubiously. "She's the queerest little coon about that that you ever did see. Why, there's a feller that I used to know'd when I ran with 41, 'way 'fore the war—that's when 41 lay down round Clinton street, you know."

Mordaunt nodded his head, as much as to say that he knew all about "41."

"He was a butcher-boy down at Washington Market. He was as nice a feller as you ever see'd, and he wasn't afraid of any man of his weight in New York. You ought for to see him put his hands up with the gloves on. He was a hummer, now I tell yer. Well, I took him up to the house, but Cris didn't cotton to him, at all. He was jist dead gone on her, but it wasn't no use. I tell yer, he thought a heap on her—his name was Billy Meeder; p'haps you know him," said Pony, suddenly winding up his eulogium on his friend.

Mordaunt said that he had never met Mr. William Meeder, but that he should be pleased to make his acquaintance.

"He's a hunky boy, now I tell yer; an' he jist loved the very ground that Cris walked on, I do believe. Why, he told me once that he'd lick any man that looked crossways at Cris, if he were big as a house, an' I know he'd tried fur to do it."

"Then your sister didn't encourage the attentions of this friend of yours?" Mordaunt said.

"Nary bit!" returned Pony, emphatically. "He wasn't her style. She's got a mind of her own, now I tell yer."

In due time the two reached the little two-story wooden house on Rivington street, where the street vender lived.

As he explained to the actor, he had the upper part of the house while another family occupied the lower floor. Families in New York are herded together in narrow quarters, like so many cattle. No wonder that the mortality list of the great city is large.

Pony ushered Mordaunt into the little front room, wherein sat his sister, Cris—busy at work at her sewing-machine—with great ceremony.

"This is Mr. Mordaunt, Crissie," he said, with a flourish of his great brawny hand, that looked like a small-sized shoulder of mutton; "you remember how we used to see him act at the New Bowery afore it burnt down."

Cris rose to her feet in some little confusion as her brother introduced the actor.

The actor was still a gentleman, though he and fortune had long since shaken hands and parted company; so, gracefully and with easy politeness, he expressed the pleasure it gave him to make the acquaintance of Miss Moore.

Crisie Moore did not belie her brother's praise. She was a little woman; possibly three and twenty, although being so small in stature, she looked like a mere girl. Her merry blue eyes were as quick and piercing as the eyes of a bird. The mass of hair that crowned her shapely little head was of a strange hue, not yellow, nor yet gold, but of an odd, unusual tint between the two. She could not be called beautiful, for her nose was too large and the contour of her face too sharp. Her lips were red and perfect in their form. The complexion pure white and red; Nature's handiwork, not Art's. The little lithe figure perfect in its outline, and the pure white brow was purity itself.

There was a little of the vixen, something of the coquette, and a great deal of the true woman—the latter tempered the two first—about Crissie Moore.

"Cris, I've spoken to Mister Mordaunt about taking our little front room," said Pony, in his blunt, honest way.

"I should be very much pleased to make one of your household, Miss Moore," said Mordaunt, in the powerful, sweet-toned voice, that so often, in the days gone by, had thrilled like liquid music through the hearts of an audience. "That is," he added, "if it will not put you to too much trouble."

"Oh, no, sir," said Crissie, quickly. With the quick instinct of woman, she had read the history of the once popular actor, in his shabby garb and in the deep lines that dissipation and want had stamped upon his face; the proud face that had once been so handsome in its manly beauty.

And so Mordaunt became a member of Pony Moore's household.

The children of toil have far more pity in their hearts for the unfortunate than the wealthy denizens of the great city.

Crisie Moore took a far deeper interest in the pale-faced wanderer than she had ever felt for any one before. Pity filled her heart; in time, that might become something else.

CHAPTER XI.

BLANCHE MAYBURY, ASTONISHES LAWYER CHUBBET.

IN a cosy office, situated in a handsome brown-stone front building, on lower Broadway, sat lawyer Chubbet. Lysander Chubbet was not a young man; far from it. His hair was silvery gray, so also were the side-whiskers, worn "mutton-chop" shape, in the English style, which fringed his fat face. He was slightly bald, and the short hair on either side of the head stuck out, instead of lying smoothly down. This peculiarity gave him the appearance of wearing a hood of gray over his head, which was still further increased by his silver-gray whiskers.

The lawyer was a portly man in form. A sleek and placid look was upon his face. The small bluish-gray eyes had a shrewd and cunning expression.

Lysander Chubbet had never particularly distinguished himself at the bar. Indeed it was whispered that all his efforts that way when a young lawyer had been signal failures. Yet Chubbet was a prosperous lawyer; had grown very wealthy by his profession, although having an ample fortune left him by his father to start on, his enemies had said that that fact was not to be wondered at.

But Chubbet was a good lawyer in some respects. Property intrusted to his hands dwindled down amazingly, yet no one could say that lawyer Chubbet had acted dishonestly in the premises.

One anxious set of heirs, whose property had been intrusted to Lysander Chubbet's hands to settle, and who after long delay had received but fifty thousand dollars, where they had expected a hundred, at the least, had said—speaking as with one voice—that lawyer Chubbet properly should be called lawyer Grab-it.

Lysander merely smiled when this was repeated to him—caressed his double chin with his smooth white hand, and said in his usual calm, sedative voice:

"Young people will have their joke. It is not my fault if the law is expensive."

And so Lysander Chubbet waxed fat and rich, wore the finest of broadcloth—the wildest of linens—went to church regularly on Sunday; omitted none of the usual forms to make his neighbors believe that he was not only a wealthy but a good man, for Lysander Chubbet had a high respect for the world's opinion.

And yet, in spite of all this good behavior—this wearing the livery of heaven to serve the devil in—some men said openly and without fear, that lawyer Chubbet "was an infernal old scoundrel."

But all men are vilified. The tongue of scandal in this world spares no one.

Mr. Chubbet had been a college chum of Eben Maybury—Blanche's father—on his death, when his will was produced, it was found that Mr. Chubbet had been appointed guardian of Blanche and the sole executor of the will.

Thus it is, in his relation to Blanche, that Lysander Chubbet is necessarily brought into our story.

It is some four days after the one on which the interview took place between Allyne Strathroy and the vagabond actor, that we visit Lysander Chubbet in his office.

The lawyer was seated in an easy-chair, gazing out, lazily, upon the crowded street beneath him.

A gentle knock resounded upon the door of the lawyer's office.

"Come in," said the lawyer, hardly turning his head, as he did not expect any special visitor. Judge of the lawyer's astonishment when Blanche Maybury entered the apartment.

She was habited in a dark walking-dress, and a little bow of magenta at the neck shone like a blaze of fire on the dark surface.

The lawyer instantly rose, and with that fatherly politeness that formed his chief stock in trade, offered the young lady a chair.

"I am truly rejoiced, my dear Miss Blanche, to see you in my dull office this morning. Your sweet presence lends a charm unto the scene which—"

and here the lawyer paused; it was a habit of his to commence a quotation and to forget the end.

Blanche seemed ill at ease. It was evident from the expression upon her face that she had something upon her mind.

The shrewd eyes of the lawyer saw by the look upon the face of the young girl that something was the matter, and inwardly he speculated as to what it was.

"Mr. Chubbet, you are my guardian," said Blanche, so abruptly that it made the old lawyer start.

"Yes, my dear," he said, recovering from the surprise occasioned by the suddenness of the remark, "as you have said, I am your guardian; and I trust that I may be allowed to take this opportunity to remark that it is at once a pleasure—I may say a happiness—I hope I may not be considered as putting it too strong, when I say, it is a joyful happiness to be your guardian; to lead your tender feet in pleasant paths to stray to—ah—hum!" and the speaker, forgetting the end as usual, wound up his speech with a graceful wave of his fat white hand.

"You know all about my father's will," said Blanche, with a troubled air.

The lawyer started; the mention of the will did not please him.

"Ah, yes—of course," he said, after a moment's pause, as if he had been considering what to say. "I suppose that I may say without fear of contradiction, that I do know all about your father's will, my dear."

Then, in an undertone, he muttered to himself, while his shrewd little eyes watched

the flushed face of the young girl anxiously, "What the deuce is she driving at?"

"I was quite a child when my father died, if you remember—" she said, with some hesitation.

"Yes, my dear, I do remember. You were a lovely flower born to blush unscathed. No! no! I—ah, well. As I was saying, you were a child." And the lawyer, smiling benignly upon the fair girl before him, looked like a great ape; the gray hood of hair giving him that expression.

"And, of course," she said, continuing her speech, "I do not remember exactly how my father's will read."

"Of course—it is natural," said Chubbet, with another beaming smile, although in his heart he did not like the way the conversation was tending, for he hadn't an idea where it might end.

"There are one or two points in my father's will upon which I want information," said Blanche, speaking with an effort, and a deep blush overspreading her face.

Chubbet opened his little eyes in wonder. He was getting more and more astonished.

"My dear young lady," he said, in his smoothest and softest tone, although he was far from being pleased, "I am perfectly familiar with your father's will. I think I can give you any information you desire in regard to it."

For a few moments Blanche was silent. She was evidently considering what to say. The old lawyer watched her with growing uneasiness.

"If I remember right," said Blanche, at length, "my father's property is held in trust by you, for me, until I reach my twenty-first year."

"Yes, my dear," said Chubbet, with a bland smile, "and I assure you that I have taken the greatest care of that trust. It has been sacred to me, and here the lawyer laid his hand upon his heart. "It has been as sacred as—well, as anything that ought to be sacred. If you would like to look over the books and see the manner in which I have invested your funds—"

"Oh, no!" cried Blanche, quickly.

The lawyer felt relieved. He was afraid that his accounts were to be examined, and though he had them in splendid shape and not to be easily questioned, still he was a little nervous and really feared the examination of Blanche more than he would that of a dozen lawyers.

"Is there any further information?" he inquired.

"Yes," Blanche answered, after a moment's pause. "If I remember rightly, you are to remain my guardian until my twenty-first year; then I am to have my property—" and the girl paused.

"On one condition," said Chubbet, in his usual mild tone, finishing Blanche's speech.

"And that is?" Blanche put the question, although she knew what the answer would be.

"That you marry Allyne Strathroy," said the lawyer. "Your father and Allyne's were boys together. It was the great desire of his life that when you grew old enough, you should marry the son of his lifelong friend. That is the reason that that clause was inserted in the will. Your father knew that young ladies sometimes take strange fancies, and he resolved, if possible, to insure your marriage with Allyne."

"But, supposing that, from any cause whatsoever, I can not fulfill my part of the contract," said Blanche, slowly, "supposing that I should refuse to marry Mr. Allyne Strathroy?"

The lawyer started in amazement. He could hardly believe his ears. He knew very well that Blanche and Allyne were devoted lovers. The strange words of the young girl astonished him. What could they mean?

"But, my dear," he said, after he had, in a measure, recovered from his amazement, "there are really no grounds for supposing any such thing. It is altogether improbable."

"But, supposing such a thing should happen," said the young girl, "what then?"

"Why, in the event of your refusing to carry out your father's behest, all the estate goes to found a public library in the city of New York. But, my dear child, why do you put such questions?" asked Chubbet, his curiosity excited by the strange conduct of the young girl.

Blanche did not seem to heed his question.

"Then, if I refuse to marry Allyne Strathroy, I am a beggar," the girl said, slowly.

"Well—that is—yes—yes, if you put it that way," said Chubbet, who couldn't make head or tail of the girl's strange questions. "But there's no danger of that, I know, my dear," he continued. "It will be a regular love-match. I am sure I never saw two young people that seemed so devoted to each other."

"Do you think so?" said Blanche, with a tinge of bitterness in her voice. "Yet, while I live, I will never be the wife of Allyne Strathroy."

CHAPTER X.

BLANCHE'S REASON.

The lawyer gazed at the fair young girl with open mouth, and in a state of complete astonishment. Recovering at length from his surprise, he spoke:

"My dear Miss Blanche, is it possible?—that is, did I understand you rightly?—did you say that you can never be—" and the lawyer paused.

"That I can never be the wife of Allyne Strathroy?" said Blanche, taking up the unfinished sentence and completing it; "yes, that's what I said."

Again the lawyer surveyed his fair client with an air of bewilderment.

"But, really," he said, "this is so unexpected—so totally unlooked for. As your guardian, my dear child, may I take the liberty of asking what is the reason of this strange determination?"

"I can not tell you," replied Blanche, quietly.

"Oh!" Lawyer Chubbet was puzzled. He stroked his double-chin; pulled first one whisker and then the other. But, it was all in vain; no relief came to his bewildered brain.

"But, really, Miss Blanche, you must allow me to say that this determination of yours is a most extraordinary one. You and Allyne always seemed to be very fond of one another. In fact, I do not think I am putting it too strong, when I say that you were devoted lovers."

"Yes," responded Blanche, a slight crimson hue mantling her white temples, "we were in love with each other, I do not deny it."

"Were!" exclaimed Chubbet, still more astonished. "Were?" he repeated, "do you mean to affirm that such a state of affairs no longer exists?"

"I do," replied Blanche, simply and honestly.

"But the reason," persisted the lawyer, "have you and Allyne quarreled?"

"No!" responded the girl.

"No? But I do not understand."

"Neither do I," sighed Blanche.

"What?" Chubbet, before astonished, was now literally confounded.

"My dear Miss Blanche," said the old lawyer, as soon he could collect his thoughts and recover from the astonishment into which he had been thrown, "are you in possession of your senses?"

"I think I am," replied Blanche, with a quiet smile.

"But, really, I do not understand this in the least," said the puzzled lawyer. "You and Allyne have been from childhood together; it has always been understood that you and he were to be married. You never before have evinced any disinclination to the match; yet now you come, without warning, without apparently any good reason—I trust I am not putting it too strong when I say without any reason whatever—and inform me that you can never be Allyne's wife. My dear Miss Blanche, you have always appeared to me to be a young lady of great natural common sense; in fact, a superior young lady, and I must say, this determination of yours surprises me—in fact, not to put too fine a point upon it, it astounds me; I am bewildered—in a maze. If you and Allyne had quarreled—as lovers will quarrel—I could understand this sudden change in your mind; but, you say no quarrel has occurred."

Lawyer Chubbet having "summed up" his case, leaned back in his chair and looked "owly." It was a strong point with the lawyer when he was perplexed and had nothing to say; to assume an air of profound wisdom, which impressed those that didn't know him with the idea that he could say a great deal if he only could.

Chubbet was not the first man in the world who had a reputation for wisdom by simply keeping the mouth shut!

"Mr. Chubbet, I will explain the reason that has prompted me to come here this morning and tell you what I have told you in regard to Allyne Strathroy, as well as I can," said Blanche, after a moment's hesitation, in a low, sweet voice that showed but little trace of embarrassment.

"Proceed, my dear Miss Blanche; I am all attention," exclaimed Chubbet, looking more "owly" and more like a great monkey than ever.

"Of course, I am well aware that it was always understood that I was to marry Allyne, and I confess—freely confess, that I have loved him. But, my feelings toward Allyne have changed. There was a time when it made me happy to be even in his presence, but now I can not bear to look upon him. I know that I am acting wrong, for I have promised Allyne to be his wife—have told him that I loved him. It was the truth then, but it is the truth no longer, for I loathe and fear him!"

"My dear child, this is but a girlish fancy," said Chubbet, in his bland way; "you will get over it in time, and then you will love Allyne as well as ever."

"No, no!" cried Blanche, impulsively. "I will never get over it. I feel it—I know it! I will not go to the altar with a lie upon my lips. I will not swear to love the man that I feel, in my heart, I detest. I will not wreck my happiness forever. You are my guardian; I have no father—no parent—I come to you with this load upon my heart, and ask you to relieve me from it."

Blanche's impulsive speech startled the old lawyer. He saw, with all his blindness, that the young girl was terribly in earnest.

"How long is it since you first thought that your feelings had begun to change toward him?" asked the perplexed lawyer.

"Two days ago," answered Blanche.

"Only two days ago?"

"Yes. I struggled against the feeling at first, thinking it was a mere fancy, but I soon became convinced that my affection for him had indeed changed." Blanche spoke with deep feeling. "I thought it

better that you should know all. That is the reason that brought me here to-day."

"My dear Miss Blanche, I really don't know what to say. This disclosure will be a terrible one for Mr. Allyne to listen to. Don't you think, my dear, that if you were to wait a month or two, you would get over this aversion toward Mr. Strathroy, and that the old love would come back?" said the lawyer, insinuatingly.

"No, no!" answered Blanche, quickly. "I can never again love Allyne Strathroy."

"But, my dear child, I am afraid if you refuse to marry Allyne Strathroy that your fortune is in danger, for the will of your father expressly provides, that, if you refuse to marry Allyne, you shall not inherit the property."

"Well, I would rather be penniless than to marry a man that I can not love," said Blanche, spiritedly.

The lawyer was indeed amazed. He would do almost any thing for money. That Blanche should throw a fortune away for a foolish whim, was something to be wondered at.

"I wish you would see Mr. Allyne, and tell him all. Do not conceal one bit of the truth. I would rather seem what he will think me—a heartless, changeable coquette, than wantonly deceive him by accepting the love that I can not return." This she said, rising.

"Very well, my dear, I will do as you wish, but you can not conceive the pain it gives me—here Chubbet put his hand on his heart, and looked sentimental—" when I think that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing two young hearts—"

"Thank you, Mr. Chubbet," said Blanche, interrupting. "If he could only know how sadly I feel about it, I am sure that he would not think me heartless." Then the fair girl swept daintily out of the room.

The lawyer sat down to his desk and wrote a short note to Allyne Strathroy. This finished, he meditated:

"Of all the incomprehensible things in this world, a young and pretty woman is the most puzzling," he muttered.

Chubbet was not the first man who had arrived at that conclusion.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 20.)

The Masked Miner:

OR,
THE IRON-MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER.

A TALE OF PITTSBURGH.

BY WM. MASON TURNER.

AUTHOR OF "UNDER BAIL," "SILKEN CORD," ETC.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FORCED OATH.

THE day passed rapidly away; there was sunshine in Grace Harley's heart, and happiness on her face. The roses were blooming again on her cheeks, and, as she walked with nervous steps the narrow limits of the room, there was an elasticity in her gait, telling unmistakably of a renewed spirit. She marked not the speeding hours, and was almost heedless of the utter seclusion which held her unwillingly aloof from the world.

Noon came and passed; the dusky twilight settled down, and the last rays of the sun had ceased to penetrate through the crevices of the door, or shimmer down the narrow flue of the chimney.

Night had come, and with it terror for Grace Harley. This was her night; she expected him; he had told her so, and this hideous man had never broken his word.

A shade of intense anxiety spread over the face of the helpless girl. Slowly she felt in her bosom, as a look of wild determination, in thrilling contrast with the late expression of happiness and joy, spread over her face. She started, as her hand sought in vain—started as if shot—her lips became pallid, and the blood flowed away from her cheeks. The dagger, she had recently possessed herself of, was not there, and then, like lightning, the dark wall-secret came back to her memory. On that very day she herself had cast the bladeless handle of the dagger in the rubbish of the closet. And the sharp spike—that was also gone! She was defenseless and alone!

Scarcely breathing, the maiden cast her eyes about her, but nothing presented itself. Slowly she realized her terrible position! Alone, in a far-distant house—with walls impenetrable almost to sound—herself entirely helpless, and in the power of a strong and desperate villain.

The light of hope died away entirely from her eyes, and despair reigned in her bosom, as she leaned back, fainting, on the sofa.

The minutes—the hours—flew by; the clock, on its rich, gilded pedestal of alabaster, above the mantel, pointed to ten o'clock.

The high wind of the preceding night had subsided, and every thing was wondrous still and subdued on the desolate hill.

Suddenly the girl raised herself, for heavy footsteps, which she had so well learned to know, broke on the silence of the night. They approached the door; the key again grated in the lock, and then the tall form of the loathsome wretch appeared. He entered—this horrible man—closed the door unsteadily, but securely, and staggered across the room. The apart-

ment was at once filled with the disgusting odor of a drunken man's breath.

The poor girl shrank shudderingly away, and her fluttering, trembling heart scarcely beat in her bosom.

"Ha! ha! my pretty flower! I've waited long enough on your obstinacy! Decide to-night! I wait no longer!" cried the fellow, in a harsh, unsteady voice, as, balancing himself by the table, he leered at her horribly, then lurched blindly toward her.

"Back, monster, back!" she screamed, springing to her feet, and confronting him.

"Back? Ay, thus, Grace Harley!" and at one bound he threw himself violently upon her. "You shall give me the wedding promise to-night, or, by heaven, I'll strangle you!"

"Oh! pity me! pity me! For God's sake—for your mother's sake!—for—for—"

"Shut up!" exclaimed the man, fiercely, at the same time covering her mouth with his hand.

The struggle was fearful between that frail girl and the strong drunken man.

Suddenly, by an effort, she broke from him. As she did so, she tore away the roll of handkerchief which covered his neck, and with it came away, too, *en masse*, the long black beard which had concealed his face. The maiden retreated rapidly to the sofa and sprung behind it for protection.

"God in heaven! Is it you then?" she exclaimed, scorn and indignation taking the place of fear; "and you would have me wed such a scoundrel as you!"

The man, half-sobered, at this untoward circumstance, started confusedly back. But he recovered himself.

"Yes! Grace Harley, it is I; and, by heavens, you shall know it to your sorrow. You have discovered me, but, mark me well, you are in my power yet! Now I shall leave you, but shall return—return, to conquer or destroy!"

As he spoke, he drew a pistol, cocked it, and advanced upon her.

"Back, base-hearted villain, or advance and stain your hands with a woman's blood!" and the maiden's stature seemed to grow with her grand and swelling indignation.

"No, no, Grace Harley!" sneered the man, ominously; "I'll not stain my hands with your blood; you are valuable to me; you have piles of gold; you shall be my greatest conquest, and I can not, *will not*, let you slip away so readily! But, heed you, my fine girl: unless you swear to me a terrible oath—one you dare not break—I'll spatter your brains on that wall! That oath is, that you will not, if you ever leave this house, expose me, by word, or sign, or hint!" and his eyes glittered wildly.

The man was now thoroughly sobered, and his eyes glared with a desperate gleam of determination. With a sudden bound, he cleared the sofa, clutched the girl with a grip of iron, and placed the cold muzzle of the pistol-barrel to her temple.

The maiden shuddered; death never was so near to her. She felt the creaking of the trigger, as the man pressed it with unsteady finger. She had life before her still; she had a father; and, she had the memory of one dearer than a father! She would die!

"I'll swear," she said, in a low, almost inaudible voice.

"Tis very well!" said the man, in a hoarse voice, "and the penalty of this oath broken, is, the instant death of your father! Look to it that you keep that oath!"

As he spoke, he hurried her aside, strode to the door, opened it, and went out, closing it securely behind him.

"May the devil seize her and her gold, now!" he exclaimed, fiendishly. "Let her rot there!" And I must see Teddy at once; and then, may the fiend curse me for my bad luck! I must leave for other parts!"

Saying this, and emphasizing the words with a horrid oath, he hurried away.

CHAPTER XXI.

LETTERS FOR TOM WORTH.

Two days had passed since the terrible events recorded in the preceding chapter.

Tom Worth was striding moodily up and down the confined limits of his cell. There was more than usual gloom upon his brow. The anxious, doubting shade, he have before noticed, had become more marked, and the prisoner's bold front of conscious innocence had changed. An unmistakable sign of foreboding now showed in every lineament of his face.

Edward Markley's testimony was a mountain in his way, and the miner knew that, unaided and alone, he could not set aside that testimony—that, whatever he might say in refutation, while having his due weight, and entitled to its proper credence, would not be sufficient to negative the toll-keeper's plain, honest evidence.

Up and down the damp cell the miner strode. The close confinement, the bad air, the habitual dampness of the prison room, already had told on the iron man. His cheek was a trifle blanched, his eyes somewhat dimmed. An air of listlessness and languor showed, as of a man on the verge of a coming illness, that he was succumbing. Yet his was still a hardy frame, and the noble muscles under his jacket-sleeve told of a wondrous vital force there yet, and in abundance.

Suddenly he paused and peered up at the narrow, grated window above him.

For several moments the prisoner gazed fixedly at that narrow aperture; then he

slowly scanned the extent of the cold, damp wall lying between the floor and that small, heavily-grated window.

He shook his head; it was twelve feet at least from the window to the floor, and he had nothing on which to climb up thither, even were he so inclined.

It may be, indeed, that Tom Worth was thinking of making some desperate effort at escape. Yet that were strange, if true, when it is remembered that he positively refused bail—refused it, too, because he was afraid, so he said, that if he accepted it, it would look as if he—in part at least—admitted his guilt. Nevertheless, as the miner for a moment gazed at the window through which scanty beams of the outer bustling world struggled, a half-hopeful, half-joyous light came into his eyes. Yet, too, as he measured the height of the cold, damp wall with his eye, the light died away.

With a sigh he turned to resume his promenade, but he paused again, as he heard the far-away rattle of the gate, opening into the corridor, on which was situated his cell. Steps were approaching; they paused at his cell; the door was opened, and the jailer, putting in his head, said:

"A friend to see you, Tom, for half an hour;" and, half-pushing old Ben Walford inside, the turnkey closed the door, locked it, and hurried away.

For a moment old Ben stood still—now looking at his friend—anon bending his ear to catch the far-away, faint footfalls of the jailer.

There was a half-mysterious, quizzical and triumphant look on the old man's face, as he drew near his friend, clasped him in his arms, and said in a low tone:

"God bless you, Tom! but I've fooled the jailer this time! He searched me; but Tom, my boy, he didn't find any thing! Ha! ha! Nevertheless, Tom, I've brought you something."

Without saying more, old Ben pulled off his overcoat, and threw it on the bed; then he laid aside his thick woolen working-jacket, and then his vest followed. Tom Worth looked wonderingly on.

"What the deuce do you mean, Ben?" he asked, as a smile came to his face. "Have you smuggled me my pipe?"

Old Ben did not answer at first, but, creeping to the heavy iron door, he listened intently for a minute. There was no sound without—not even an echo.

"No, my boy, I did not bring your pipe; but—well, I'll show you in a moment."

He took out his pocket-knife, and hastily ripping up the back lining of his vest, drew out, with an air of satisfaction, from their secure hiding-place, two letters. He handed them at once to the prisoner.

"Both for you, Tom. One came yesterday morning—the foreign one, Tom—and the other was sent in an envelope directed to me, at the 'Black Diamond.' Inside that envelope was your letter, and a few words on a strip of paper, telling me if I 'valued life' to give you the letter with my 'own hands'; and, by the eternal pillars! I've done it, my boy. And, my boy," he continued, casting his eyes up at the small streak of daylight glancing through the narrow window, "you had better read the letters while you have light; one of them, anyway, must be important."

The young man took the letters with a trembling hand, for the word "foreign," used by old Ben, had sent a thrill through his frame, and the warm blood to his face.

He took the letters in his hand, and then, fearfully, he turned his head away; he was afraid to look upon the envelopes. Old Ben stared at him wonderingly.

"What is it, Tom, my boy? Read the letters; they may contain news of importance."

"Yes, yes, Ben, I'll read them."

He turned suddenly and glanced over the envelopes. The effect was marvelous. The miner started violently back, gasped for breath, and sunk forward on the small bed.

"My God!" he muttered, in a deep, almost anguished tone.

"Read the letters, my boy; the daylight is going," said old Ben, in a low voice, creeping closer to his friend.

But it was fully five minutes before Tom Worth summoned up resolution and courage to tear open the envelope of one of the letters.

This was directed to him, in a large, bold, distinct handwriting, and bore a foreign stamp and post-mark.

The miner slowly drew out the folded sheet, and spreading it out, commenced to read. As he did so, a note fell out.

We can not attempt to describe the wondrous change and play of expression that came and went, like faint flashes of lightning, over the half-bronzed, half-pale face of the prisoner.

He read on.

It was a letter of moderate length, and was clearly written; yet several moments elapsed before Tom Worth, with a half-cry of exultation, folded the sheet again, and replaced it with the note in the envelope.

"My God! my God! thy ways are inscrutable!"

For ten minutes he sat and gazed at the stone floor, seemingly oblivious of the presence of his friend. His thoughts were wandering far away, and a look as of holy triumph, either already accomplished or in his grasp, grew over his bearded face.

"Tom, my boy," suggested old Ben,

"there's another letter; read it, for the daylight is almost gone!"

The prisoner started, cast a look of gratitude at the old man, and said:

"Yes, Ben, my dear friend; I have not forgotten; and Ben, bend your ear closer, and let me tell you—I must be gone!" He said the last words in a deep whisper.

Old Ben gazed with amazement at his friend, over whom so wondrous a change had so suddenly come. But he replied:

"Of course, my boy, and by the eternal pillars! say the word, and you shall go at any time! I know—"

"Enough, Ben, and now I'll read the other letter. Good heavens! I had not noticed it! Her writing! Wait, Ben, and expect news!"

He tore open the envelope, snatched the faintly-traced half-sheet from within, and at a glance had read it.

"Thank God! thank God!" he murmured, "and she—an angel in heaven not purer—exonerates me! God stand by her and me! Now, at last, daylight appears, and—"

Rising, he strode several times up and down the room—old Ben, almost agast with wonderment, watching him the while. Again, and this time almost defiantly, he cast his burning eyes up at the grated half-window, so high above him.

"My only chance!" he muttered, "and it shall not fail me! I'll go; I'll fight this wrong; right myself, and then I'll be gone!"

"Ben," he said, in a low voice, "the last letter concerns you. Nay, speak not. It concerns you only in this way: work in the cause of humanity is expected of you."

"And was I ever backward, Tom, when such work was needed?" and the old man trembled with the infectious excitement.

"What is it? Speak, my boy, and count on me!" he continued, laying his large, brawny hand on his "boy's" shoulder, as if to add force to his words.

But Tom Worth did not reply at once; he was again glancing at the grated window above him, and measuring the damp, oozy wall with his eye.

"Ben," at length he said, "in the same low tone, tremulous with excitement—the excitement of hope, Ben, are your muscles in good condition? Can you, as of old, bend a two inch iron bar, with a blow of your fist? Can you now lift a thousand pounds, dead-weight, with your shoulders?" and he still kept his eyes on the grated window.

"Ay? Try me, my boy!" I can do more—yes, by the eternal pillars, I can even, as a child's play, tear out that iron grating up there!"

As he spoke these words significantly, he bent his sinewy right arm, until the gorgeously swelling muscles of that arm burst asunder, the binding jacket-sleeve, and glowed with a dull-white luster in the gloom of the cell.

"Tis all right! I believe you, Ben!" said the young man, in the same low tone, with an air of satisfaction; "but, Ben, from that window to the floor is twelve feet."

"You are right, Tom, and a two-inch manilla rope can be bought for ten cents, long enough to reach that distance, and strong enough to bear an ox," was the significant reply.

"Tis very good, Ben; you understand me, well. Then, there is work for both of us. Listen well, Ben, for time flies, and your half-hour is almost gone. Listen, and let not your left ear hear what I say to the right!"

Then ensued a rapid, earnest conversation, in an underbreath, during which old Ben never stirred muscle, or uttered a word in denial or objection. The jailer's steps were heard coming. Old Ben sprang to his feet.

"It shall be done, my boy! God is in it, and we can not fail! The right-hand tower of the Cathedral will do, and, my boy, we'll work together!"

"Time's up, sir," called the jailer.

"Yes, sir; right away," replied the old miner, buttoning his coat. "Good-by, Tom. Pleasant dreams, and a good sleep! and, maybe, we'll see one another to-morrow!" With that he went out, and Tom Worth was again alone.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RED LIGHTS.

THE shades of a dark, misty, disagreeable night had fallen upon the city. The lamps had long since been lit. The streets were being rapidly deserted, and the flaming shop-windows were going out into darkness one by one.

It was eleven o'clock.

Striding rapidly yet stealthily along by the Union depot, at this late hour, two tall men took their way up an unfrequented street, leading to the hill beyond. They seemed to be anxious to avoid the flaming reflectors, for they drew their hats more closely over their eyes, and their large coats more snugly up around their ears.

They were soon hid, however, in the friendly gloom of an alley, and at length entered Bedford avenue. Turning at once to the left, they began the ascent of that steep thoroughfare.

"Walk up, Teddy; come closer!" I want to speak a few final words with you."

"Yes, boss, I am here," said the man, panting from exhaustion.

"I have seen a strange shape, Teddy, hanging around my cabin, of late," said the first speaker. "I saw it last night for the

third time, and I am not mistaken. It was a heavy, stalwart man. He did not see me, yet, it was evident, he was watching about the house. Here let us stop; we are far enough," he said, suddenly, "and I am blown, too!"

They seated themselves on a large stone post, thrown by the roadside, and said:

"And I, too, boss, for we have come at a slashing stride. I am willing to rest, especially as you say there is still work before us to-night."

"Yes, Teddy; there is work! The house I am sure is suspected and watched—why, and by whom, I do not know. The girl must be removed; you and I must do it, and do it quietly, and then before the dawn of day, the furniture must be brought away. Have the carriage ready by half-past one o'clock. There will be no prowlers then. By a smart drive to the 'Shinley'—for it is there I shall take her—you see I can return soon, and get the wagon. I'll help you, and one load will take all. The truth is, Teddy, we are in a scrape!"

"We, boss! Why I—"

"Yes, we, for you are implicated as much as I am—more so, too; and so it would seem in a court of justice."

The other made no reply; he acquiesced quietly in the decision of his companion.

"I'll do my part, boss," at length he said, "but, I hope you'll pay me to-night, sir, for you say you'll be gone for a while."

"Do you not trust me, Teddy? However, 'tis nothing; it shall be as you say. Meet me on the hill at half-past one—that is, one hour and a half from this time. You can conceal the carriage in the hollow, to the left of the street, you know; you have done so before. Meet me then, and I will pay you. And now be off, for you have no time to lose. I will hurry home and fix up a few things."

The men at once separated—one returning down the avenue, the other striking across the lower end of Cliff Hill toward the Allegheny river.

We will return for a brief season to the cell of Tom Worth.

When old Ben had gone, the prisoner arose, and, approaching the grating above him, drew the letters out from his bosom, and perused them leisurely again. Then he glanced about him. He rapidly gathered together all the papers which he had written from time to time since he had been in prison. He tore them to fragments, bit by bit, and flung them under the mattress.

Then he gathered up the few articles of wearing apparel he had with him, and put them on, one by one. Seating himself so as to front the grated window, he stretched his limbs out lazily, and letting his head fall upon his breast, seemed to doze.

One of these singular letters we can not now lay before the reader—we mean the letter bearing on its envelope a foreign stamp. But the other, the briefer one, ran thus:

"MY DEAR FRIEND, for such I know you to be—I have learned all I know you are innocent of the crime of which you are charged, as you were bold and fearless in saving me that terrible night from certain destruction! Merest chance has given me an opportunity to write to you. God in his mercy grant that the chance will prove availing! I know you have a staunch friend in Ben Walford; from what I have read of him, I know he can be trusted. I am kept as a prisoner in a house on a high hill, and within the city limits. Where, I can not exactly say. Tell your friend, the old miner, to go to some eminence and watch all around him to-morrow night—watch in every direction—and let the hour be half-past one o'clock. At that hour, if he keeps his eyes well about him, he will see some flaming balls of red light floating on the air somewhere. Let him mark well the spot, and hasten thither, for I am there! The rest I leave to him. I can write no more. I long to be free, that you may be. God bless you, as my preserver!"

GRACE HARLEY.

The night grew on; the darkness became more intense.

Tom Worth still sat with his head bowed on his breast; his heavy, regular breathing told that he was sleeping soundly.

Twelve o'clock rung out.

Suddenly, and before the vibrations from the neighboring clanging bells had ceased to thrill in the air, Tom started in his chair. A distant, faint, ticking sound caught his ear; it came from the grated window above.

The prisoner slowly arose and gave a faint whistle. It was answered immediately from above. Then the young man stood silently awaiting.

He could distinctly hear the heavy, labored breathing, as of a strong man doing work which taxed his strength to the utmost. With bated breath he waited.

Suddenly the loose rubbish and mortar from above rolled down into the cell, and a cold gust of wind blew in.

The grated window was entirely removed!

A moment after, a stout hempen cord was cast noiselessly down into the cell through the open window. The prisoner clutched it as a drowning man grasps a slender straw.

"Haul away, Ben!" he said, in a low, excited, but determined voice.

The rope at once tautened; then came the terrible strain, as the prisoner's full weight bore like lead on the creaking cord. But that cord was faithful.

Up—up—the window was reached. In an instant the prisoner felt his shoulders

clutched in a giant's grasp; then he was slowly drawn through the aperture. A moment more, and he stood on the hard ground without, locked in a vice-like embrace against the brawny breast of old Ben Walford.

But they lost no time. They turned at once, walked a few rods, sprang over the iron railing lightly, and stood in the street, now silent and deserted.

They crossed Fifth avenue, and when they had reached the somber shadow of the towering Cathedral they paused.

"Here's the place!" said the old miner, in a low tone; "and, my boy, 'tis a giddy climb outside of the steeple on that light scaffolding. Thank God that is there! It's an awful risky business on such a night as this. Yet the top of that steeple is the only place that will serve us; it is high enough!"

"Yes, Ben, and we must climb it, come what may!"

"Then come, Tom; we've no time, for I must get a carriage yet. 'Tis now not very far from one o'clock, and we must not hesitate."

The old man spoke in a low, excited, but decided voice.

Nothing further was said. The two men passed softly around the inclosure to the left of the Cathedral—that is, down Grant street, and, leaping over the fence, groped their way beneath the overhanging scaffolding which led up even to the summit of the giddy spire.

They reached the first scaffolding, and searching about found another ladder leading higher. The other staging was reached; another ladder found; and thus, on and on upward and upward, the two friends climbed higher and higher.

The sharp steeple was growing more tapering and slender, moment by moment; and now, as the men paused for breath, it seemed that they could girdle it in their arms.

Glancing upward—there in the uncertain gloom, just above them, towered the cross!

At sickening feeling crept over Tom Worth, and he dared not glance below. He covered down on the narrow staging, that swung and rocked under the wind, which, at this great altitude, blew and sung so madly; and with closed eyes and almost suspended breath, he clung on with a nervous grasp to the swaying boards, which alone held him from destruction.

Not a word was spoken for several minutes. At length old Ben said, in a low voice:

"A ticklish place this, Tom! Hold on tight! We can see the top of Mount Washington from here!"

"Can you see the top of Boyd's Hill?" asked the other, in a low breath, without opening his eyes. He dared not trust himself as yet to look once, despite the gloom surrounding him.

"Easily, and the very top!" was old Ben's reply.

Then watch in that direction, for, unless I am wondrously mistaken, we will see that way what we seek."

Then ensued a long silence.

The time sped swiftly by, and still the old man watched. One o'clock had sounded, and Tom Worth had at last dared to look around him. He was painfully excited.

Slowly glide the minutes one by one, and then suddenly the half-hour stroke pealed loud and clear from a neighboring belfry.

The men strained their eyes around them, but—yes! almost before the echo of the clock-bell ceased to quiver on the dead, sleeping air, a red light, as of a ball of flame, small, and quickly fleeting, flashed out in the night, far away, apparently on the distant horizon. Then another, and another, and another still! And then all was darkness.

"She has kept her word!" said Tom Worth, "and I was not mistaken! We must hurry, Ben, for Boyd's Hill is more than a step from here!"

So saying, Tom Worth slid along the plank to the end, swung himself around the upright scantling which held the scaffold, reached the friendly ladder, and commenced the descent. Old Ben followed close behind him.

Staging after staging was passed, and, at last, the two men stood at the bottom. In a minute more they were in the street, and, without pausing, hurried away.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 15.)

WATCHING, WAITING, PRAYING.

BY FRANK S. FINE.

Watching for the Savior's call
To summon me away;
Waiting for His holy voice
To change this night to day;
Praying for his pardoning hand
That I may never stray.

Watching and waiting and praying for rest,
With the cross of my Savior clasped to my breast.

Watching for the time to come
When I shall be no more;
Waiting for the loved ones left
Upon the other shore;
Praying that we meet again
To part for evermore.

Watching and waiting and praying for peace,
When this life with its troubles forever shall cease.

Watching with the angel group
Around the heavenly throne;
Waiting for God's look of love
When grief shall be unknown;
Praying for the weary hearts
Who live their lives alone.

Watching and waiting and praying for you,
Who stand by the cross of Christ, faithful and true.

Even unto Death.

BY MARY GRACE HALPINE.

THERE were two of them in that room. One an old man, dignified and even majestic in his aspect, but with a look of sorrow in his venerable face; the other a woman, young and very beautiful, but whose pale face looked still paler in contrast with the dark eyes, that flashed forth so much scorn and indignation.

"Father, this is not all. What I have told you—the daily torture, the countless insults, which I am powerless either to avoid or resist—are nothing to what I have just discovered. He forged the letters that separated me from the only man I ever loved. Eugene Marchmont's heart never once swerved in its loyalty to me!"

"My daughter, you amaze me."

"It is so; my husband has confessed—taunted me with it! Oh, my father, how could you take advantage of a reckless moment of despair to hurry me into a marriage with a man whose heart is so false and cruel, and who had nothing to commend him but his wealth and position?"

"Was it well or wisely done, father?"

"My child, I meant it for the best!"

There was a touching pathos—not only in the words, but in the tones in which they were spoken, which were tremulous with compassionate tenderness, but the daughter was too excited to heed it.

"Such a union could not but result in misery; but it might have been endurable but for my knowledge of his treachery, his baseness. As it is his very presence suffocates me, the sound of his voice, his step fills me with unutterable horror. Father, it is you who made this marriage, and it is to you that I look for relief from the wretchedness it has brought me. Peace, happiness, I no longer expect, but freedom from such constant torture I must have, or I shall go mad!"

"My child, what would you have me do? Are not your father's heart and home open to you? Come back to me; you shall have the same place in my house that you had before you left it, the same care and tenderness."

"He will not suffer it. Only this morning I implored him to let me return to you, telling him that he should have all that I brought him, if he would but let me go; but he mocked my tears, and laughed my entreaties to scorn. It was not love that made him so determined to win me; it was hate; hatred of me, because of the wound I gave his vanity when I refused him, and hatred of him whom he supplanted, but whom he can never drive from my heart. The knowledge of this not only increases his rancor, but his determination not to let go his hold on me."

"I will speak to him; though he refuses you, he will have pity on my gray hairs."

"Pity, father! how little do you know the man! There is no such feeling in his hard and cruel heart. There is no escape from him but by death. Wretched as he makes my life, he is careful not to commit himself. The law protects the wife's person from her husband's violence, but he can break her heart at his leisure!"

"Be calm, and listen to me, my child. As you say, it is I who made this marriage, and it is I who will free you from it! Only obey my instructions implicitly. Your husband has a country house a few miles from the city; go there on the next train, and remain until you hear from me."

"But why not to yours—the sweet place where I spent my happy girlhood?"

"Because it will be better for you not to quit your husband's protection until—until the terms of your separation are agreed upon."

"Then I shall be free from him? Oh, joy!"

"You shall be free from him; he shall trouble you no more. Trust to your father, Pauline, and all will be well. Now embrace me, my daughter, and go; you will have but brief time to prepare for your journey."

Afterward Pauline recalled to her mind tearfully the yearning tenderness with which her father held her to his heart, and kissed her lips and forehead.

The next day Mr. Verner called upon his son-in-law.

"I have come to dine with you," he said, quietly.

There had been a coolness between the two for some months, but however surprised Mr. Burchell might have been at this announcement, he received it very smilingly, treating his father-in-law with studied, though rather ironical politeness.

They dined quite alone.

"I am sorry that your charming daughter could not be present," remarked the host, when the cloth was removed and the wine brought on; "she would have been delighted at such an exhibition of paternal and filial affection! But, to tell the truth she left very suddenly for the country, yesterday; and without even honoring me so far as to acquaint me with her intentions."

"It is I who counseled her to go and to remain away until—until the terms of your separation are agreed upon."

A light, mocking smile curled the thin lips of Burchell.

"And so you have determined upon my separation from the wife I adore? How cruel!"

"I have. That, which was planned by hate, and consummated by a fraud so mon-

strous, is no marriage in the sight of heaven, however the law may regard it."

"So Pauline has told you. Was it not a clever bit of strategy?"

There was a brief glimpse of the indignation that filled the father's heart.

"It was—but let that pass. All that my daughter brought you shall be yours, if you will allow her to return in peace to her father's house."

"But I choose to retain both wife and dowry."

"If you refuse, death will separate you, and soon. Can you not see how white her cheek has grown, and thin? She can not long endure the torture to which she is subjected."

"And so her cheek is growing thin and pale? She suffers—she who lured me on to love, only to scorn it? My good sir, you could not possibly tell me any thing more delightful, or more calculated to strengthen my determination not to forego my legal claims upon her."

"And your decision is unalterable?"

"It is. Only death shall separate us!"

"Let it be so, then! it is vain to struggle against the decrees of fate. This wine is of rare vintage; let us pledge ourselves in it once more, ere we separate."

"The health and happiness of my beloved wife!" said Burchell, as he drained the glass that the old man filled, and pushed toward him.

But the mocking smile died upon his lip.

"The wine affects me strangely!" he muttered, raising his hand to his forehead.

Verner regarded his companion with a singular look.

"Unhappy man! said I not that death would separate you from your victim, and soon? God be merciful to you, who have shown no mercy, and pity you, as you have not pitied me!"

"Wretch! you have poisoned me!" shrieked Burchell, staggering to his feet. "Help! help!"

But the cry died in inarticulate moans upon his lips. He made a frantic effort to reach the bell-rope, but fell prostrate upon the rug, foaming at the mouth, and his features horribly convulsed.

Without even a glance at him, Mr. Verner rinsed carefully the glass, which had contained the fatal draught, and then left the room.

He descended the stairs. The footman was dozing in one of the hall chairs.

"Your master is either ill, or overcome with wine; you had better see to him," he said, as he passed through.

Going directly home, he entered his study. Seating himself at his desk, he wrote a few lines, which carefully sealing, he directed to Eugene Marchmont.

He then went to the sideboard, and drained to the bottom a cup that stood in one corner, filled with a dark-colored liquid. Then, after carefully rinsing the cup, he took the letter and proceeded to the post-office.

Mr. Verner had deposited the letter in the box, and was turning away, when he was observed to suddenly reel, and fall to the ground.

When they lifted him up, life was found to be extinct.

"Heart disease," said the wise and learned doctor, who was summoned to his aid.

"Apoplexy," said another, equally as wise—in his own conceit—as he looked upon Harvey Burchell's livid countenance.

"DIED BY THE VISITATION OF GOD!" was the coroner's verdict upon them both.

Those cold, rigid lips gave no token of the terrible truth.

Mr. Verner's letter to Eugene Marchmont was as follows:

"MY DEAR EUGENE:—

"You will see by the inclosed letters the nature of the plot that robbed you of your betrothed wife, and which has but just come to my knowledge.

"I have taken measures to separate Pauline from the man who has added cruelty to the blackest falsehood. But certain symptoms warn me that I shall soon leave her fatherless; and to your care and tenderness I commend her. And should she ever be free to unite her fate with yours, I give her to you anew, together with my love and blessing."

ANDRE VERNER.

Eugene Marchmont received this letter as a solemn bequest from the dead; and, as soon as he heard of Pauline's desolate condition, he hastened to her.

Pauline made no pretense of mourning for the husband whose conduct had been one record of wrong and cruelty, and as soon as she recovered from the shock of her father's death, they were quietly married.

And if any suspicion of the truth ever entered her husband's mind, it was never allowed to cloud the happy heart and life that was now blended so intimately with his own.

THE NEW STORY

Commenced in this issue, is a romance of remarkable power from the pen of GEORGE S. KATME, an author of no little celebrity in the field of sensation literature, but sensational only in the sense of intense and highly dramatic portraiture, such as eminently distinguishes Charles Reade, Jefferson, Le Faver, and writers of that school. Mr. Katme's new work is a story of a rather extraordinary character, equal in intense personal interest to any thing that has been given for many a day. The readers of the SATURDAY JOURNAL may, with confidence, anticipate its publication with pleasure. It will prove a literary feast.

Saturday Journal

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Contributors and Correspondents.

MSS. unaccompanied by stamps for their return, if they are unavailable, are regarded as of no value to the author and are destroyed. We do not preserve matter subject to future order. Nor do we take from the office MSS. underpaid in postage. Authors should write very legibly: the best chirography is always the first read on the editorial table. Illegible and incorrect manuscript is almost uniformly cast aside as "unavailable." In preparing matter for the press, use commercial note size paper, and write only on one side. Tear the half sheet off as you write and fold the pages distinctly. All this is essential to an editor's and the compositor's convenience. Many things unavailable to us are well worthy of use elsewhere. All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention. Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Poem, "VISION IN THE GROVE," not available. Author asks us to "reserve the manuscript if it is not published." We must make it a rule to reserve no MS. "subject to future order"—which means extra trouble and labor for us. If authors wish to preserve their MSS., they must send (along with the MS.) stamps for a return, if it is not available.

The attention of the author of "AURORA, OR THE HIDDEN HOME OF THE ROBBER CHIEF," is called to the above. His MS. is unavailable. To his numerous queries of a personal nature, we can hardly reply. Judging by the MS. submitted, the writer will have to wait for success in authorship. The author mistakes in supposing that we are teachers of the Art of Composition. The pressing duties of the editorial desk forbid that we should reply to applicants for information which good text-books can supply.

Can not use "DAY'S DOINGS AT A PRINCE," and return the MS. as per stamps inclosed.

The "LAWLESS" sketches, Nos. 5-6-7, we can use with slight excisions. Eve writes well, but she sometimes wanders slightly from her text. Always stick to your text! Is good advice in or out of the pulpit.

"ONLY AN OLD MAID" we may use.

Authors are especially enjoined to brevity in their correspondence. Long letters are an abomination. It is a well-established fact, long letters only come from those having very little to say!

The poem, "SUN AND SEA," is very well conceived, but is so defective in many of its lines that it should have revision before use. The author must learn the proprieties of measures and poetic feet. A good musical ear generally corrects defects of rhythm, but it is not safe to trust to that corrective. No poet can truly succeed as such who is not thoroughly familiar with the art of verse. Read a few pages of Poe's "Literary," or his "Art and Principles of Poetry," and you will quickly discover what are your own shortcomings as a writer of verse.

"A READER" wants a good preparation for cleaning the teeth. Finely pulverized charcoal is excellent; and Old Windsor soap is much used; orris and charcoal powder is a favorite, and pure cold water applied with a soft brush twice or three times a day is best of all. Avoid all nostrums.

Can not use "HAUNTED CHURCH," and return same as per author's order.

Can find a place for "STRUGGLE ON."—Also the border sketch, "A FEARFUL NIGHT."—Also for the two sketches, "CHOOSING A HUSBAND," and "HOW SHE THWARTED THEM."

The long story, "GOLD HUNTERS," we can not render available as a composition. It is imperfect as a composition, though very fair as to story. The theme, however, is very trite.

Parties writing to make "engagements" are informed that, as a general thing, such engagements are impossible. We prefer to keep our columns open for the best that comes, and to be left at perfect liberty to select the best. "Engagements" hamper us, and we do not care to be controlled, as many publishers are, by having matter in hand that must be used whether it is good or not. Our motto is *Excellence!*

We not unfrequently receive stamps which bear every evidence of having been once used. Of course parties remitting them must be aware of the heavy sin they commit, and their liability to arrest. In all such cases the entire inclosure is destroyed by us, for we do not think any person who would cheat in such small things as a stamp can be honest in what they write.

Foolscap Papers.

Hunting.

I AM an old shot. I am not exactly a son of a gun, but I always had a gun when I was a boy; it was a pop-gun; that's how I became a good shot. I could mash a fly seven times out of six and still survive. I never failed to hit my brother in the eye every time, nor missed a licking afterward; so, when I got a gun in my hands I could shoot it off as well as anybody, and the ball would go wherever the gun happened to point, with an accuracy that kept the neighbors in a pretty lively state.

I could hit any barn, I didn't care how large it was; and when Gribbs and I went

hunting the other day it was with the full understanding that I was to kill all the squirrels and he to carry them, and one of the flasks—I carried the other that held the powder. He didn't know enough about a gun to tell whether the stock went off or the barrel, and even asked me why I didn't fetch more ramrods; he thought I shot them. He was a member in the Reserves during the late lamented war, and that accounts for it.

He never shot off a gun in his life but once, and then he didn't intend to do it, but he ran against a string which his neighbor had no business to stretch before his chicken-coop, and his limp is quite picturesque.

We took a deck of cards along so we would be sure of game of some kind or other, and hadn't got well into the woods when I saw a squirrel walking leisurely up a tree, picking his teeth with a splinter; this excited me, and Gribbs told me not to point that gun at his head, as they might both go off at the same time, and he had some little debts that he shouldn't like to leave, as he had had them so long. Then I rested the gun on a sapling, felt sorry for the squirrel, and fired. It stopped and looked down at me as if the report had shocked it. I told Gribbs to keep his eye on him, and hold him there till I loaded up again, which I deliberately proceeded to do by putting the shot in first, a layer of powder, and another layer of shot, and forgetting to take the ramrod out I took another rest and fired, but the gun didn't go off, and the squirrel did. Gribbs said if I'd unlock it it might go, but when I turned the gun up it ran out very easily. In the next hour we saw no less than one squirrel, but he was gone in a minute like a dish of last night's ice cream. I was very well aware that if we had no gun every bush would be full of them.

Gribbs said he couldn't see why they didn't come out, as they stood no chance to be disturbed in the least. A flock of partridges rising suddenly nearly scared us, but after we ran a hundred yards we got well over it. A woodpecker rapping on a tree took us back a little, but didn't take us back over sixty yards.

What a lonesome feeling gets over a man in the woods! Not being a woodman I couldn't get over it, but if we had any one to protect us I wouldn't have felt half so bad.

We sat down and took a rest, and heard the birds sing, and watched the musketeers chasing chicken-hawks; and Gribbs emptied his game-bag and counted the game, and found we hadn't any at all—only the bottle, and the little wasn't very long in that for he had a better lip for that than eye for game. Gribbs, before, was so glad that he came, that he wished he was at home, and his face was covered o'er with invisible smiles, but now he was in good humor, and pointed to the fork of a sapling where he said he saw something. I thought I saw it, too, and immediately laid siege, but after many rounds Gribbs went to the tree, saying, "it must be dead by this time," and reaching up found it was a piece of rotten wood. I gave up that he had the dead wood on me this time. I discovered, too, that the gun carried to the left, and I bent it a little the other way, and when we saw another squirrel I only had to shoot eleven times at it—Gribbs said twelve, but I want the world to know that it was only eleven—and then Gribbs said if I would quit scaring it he would hit it with a rock, which he did, and it fell to the ground, and flopped about so lively that I thought it had more life than it ever had, but I ran up to it fearlessly, and began to punch at it quite excitedly with the muzzle of my gun, missing it at every thrust, and running the muzzle and the business generally into the ground; and when I came to load again I found the barrel was too full of mud for utterance, and I sat down in despair and a yellow jacket's nest, while Gribbs killed the squirrel dead with a stick, and put it in the game-bag and started on the hunt of me, as I had left those regions so suddenly that I hadn't time to tell him what I was about or to give him any detailed instructions about the place where I should stop, which was in the first deep hole in a creek that I came to.

When I came to the surface for breath the yellow-jackets were gone, but each bank was ornamented by a lion, I first thought, but in reality a bull-dog, with murder in his mind. I tried each side to get out, but no, they wouldn't allow of any such an idea.

I called them endearing names; I yelled for the police; I inveighed against them in a language which, in polite circles, might have been profanely considered; then I sat down to rest, with my head out of water, and about as happy as a monkey in a steel-trap. The evening shades began to descend with terrific force. I didn't mind sleeping all night in the water so much, but I was afraid of the dew. I heard footsteps. Some one was coming. It was the owner of the land; he picked up my gun on the bank and asked me why I was trespassing on his land. I said I wasn't, I was trespassing on water, I thought. Told him I had seen one of his signs, but it read, "NO TREES PASSING ON THIS FARM," evidently written by the district school-master.

He threatened to have me arrested; told him I wished some policeman would take me out of that place; but after compromising with him by giving him my gun and my hat, he let me out, and then Gribbs came up looking very much surprised, and like he had been asleep somewhere.

Then we started back, and were soon two lost Babes in the Woods, with not a Robin in sight; so we took lodgings under a tree, which were not altogether on the European plan, as we had no bed-bugs, but we had plenty of wood-tick, and when Gribbs got through talking about bears, Indians, and other kangaroos, we fell into a gentle slumber but didn't hurt ourselves.

I may add, the squirrel was stuffed and presented to the Smithsonian Institute; and any one desiring instructions in hunting will please address the undersold with stamps, and the necessary information will be sent sealed, and securely corked.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

A BLOW FROM A FRYING-PAN.

THOUGH IT DOES NOT HURT, IT SULLIES.—
Spanish proverb.

THE Spaniard who concocted that proverb was a genius, and if he were living now I'd invite him to an oyster-supper, and give him a welcome at the same time. Spanish frying-pans may be made of very light material for aught I know, but I have my doubts as to their not hurting. We won't dispute about that, as we are assured of their sully. The frying-pans of real life are those cold, cutting words that are so often spoken of us. I'd rather have a good sound whipping any day than have people pester and scold at me. Hadn't you?

But, I'll tell you where the sort of frying-pans I have reference to most abound: it is in what is styled "good society." Many a good woman's reputation has been sullied there, and just a slight hint or an *innuendo* has caused others to think of some fair lady as though she was the vilest of the vile; and when her reputation has been blackened, "society" will say, "I never thought her much," when this very society dragged her down to where she now is.

Supposing a person is not all we should think he or she ought to be, hadn't we better look on the brighter side and think the goodness outweighs the ill?

If we can't speak well of any one we should keep our tongue between our teeth. But for mercy's sake, don't hint and leave people in the dark as to what your real meaning is. "Speak out boldly, or not at all." People do love to pick a person to pieces, and it is as great a treat to them as the bones of a chicken would be to a hungry dog. Suppose, now, Mrs. A. happens to be removing the dust from the window with her pocket-handkerchief at the moment young Speedie is passing; won't Miss Pry who lives opposite, and is near-sighted, declare to every one that she saw Mrs. A. making signals to young S., and won't Mr. A. scream, "Divorce, madam; divorce!" in poor innocent Mrs. A.'s ears?

And when Mrs. A. goes home to mamma won't all the neighbors say: "How much misery Miss Pry has saved poor A.?" Yes, they will: and Miss Pry will continue to flatten her nose against the window-pane in hopes to blight some other couple. Perhaps Miss Pry meant no wrong in the first place; she threw the frying-pan, and it hurt her not, although it sullied Mrs. A.'s reputation for life. Miss Pry is no imaginary character; she lives in every city—has a home in town, country and village—and between you and me, she won't remove until the days are fifty hours long.

If a person writes a book and has an enemy for a reviewer, will that book live on its own merits despite of unjust criticism? You can say "yes" as long as you have a mind to, but I can't believe it. If we have offended any one, or he us, and we get hold of a book he has written, don't we read every line in hopes to find a flaw, or to prove the moral an evil one, and say to others, as well as to ourselves, "Well, if I couldn't write better than that I'd give up!"

Take, for instance, a poor invalid really in want of more sympathy than medicine, sitting at an open window in summer, and inhaling the aroma of the flowers or new-mown hay: don't you suppose ten out of every twelve who pass that window will exclaim: "Laziness, nothing but laziness," and that little three-syllabled word will be carried on the wind, and reach ear after ear until people will say: "Well, laziness shan't have any of my fine grapes or other choice fruits?"

I agree with you, my friend, that laziness is a hideous disease, but I don't say every one I see idle is lazy. If I do I hadn't ought to. Haven't you seen people almost ready to drop with fatigue, and thrown your frying-pan at them in the shape of an unkind word, or by saying: "Well, if you had as much as I have to do you'd drop down dead!"

I have often thought my own burdens hard until I have seen others harder worked and poorer paid, and I resolved to put away the frying-pan until I saw some better occasion to use it. And I've been thankful ever afterward that I did so, and there are a couple less people unsullied by its contact.

But, the real true *bona fide* frying-pan is bad company. Nothing injures, sullies or hurts one more than it. Young man or young woman, let me talk to you like a grandfather or grandmother.

The truest saying (out of Scriptural ones, of course) is that "A man is known by the company he keeps." You may be good as custard-pie, as sweet as maple sugar, and as pure as the "Beautiful Snow," and yet, if you associate with those upon

whom there is a stigma, you find yourself classed in the same category as your companions. "Why is this thus?" Artemus Ward was wont to say. You remark, it doesn't seem like justice. Goodness me! If justice was meted out to every single soul of us, the days of perfection would have come, indeed. But there's little fear of that happening yet awhile; at least I don't expect to live to see it and I'm not so old, only—

But, there! The family Bible containing the record of my birth is "up chamber," and as the postman is waiting to take this to the office I s'pose I can't gratify your curiosity. Don't say you haven't got any, because you wouldn't be a human being if you hadn't.

If you don't like what I say, have said, and am going to say, blow me up! Vent your indignation by advising me to desist! But, don't, for the sake of the iron-mongers, fling your frying-pan by saying: "I wouldn't be amiss for Eve to take a spoonful of the advice she gives us herself. That would sully Miss Lawless' reputation to such an extent that my good friends of the SATURDAY JOURNAL might print in big letters "EVE LAWLESS HAS DIED OF DISGUST!" And I'd be fit to cry—or throw my frying-pan into the junk-dealer's cart. There now!

EVE LAWLESS.

OUR AIM IN LIFE.

OUR aim in life, and we may safely say, the most successful yet achieved, with one slight exception, viz.: that of keeping the household awake during wee sma' hours of night—was to learn to walk.

After gaining the art to a certain degree of perfection, true to human nature our aspirations led us on to more difficult achievements, until passing through in their respective order: building block-houses—blowing tin-whistles—spinning tops—smashing window-glass—running away from school, and falling in love with the girl that sat opposite, we felt prepared to meet the stern realities of life, as we had fancied them to be, and yearned to show to the world our ability to "paddle our own canoe."

But a few years and we launched out upon the great sea of life. Scarcely had we left the shore of paternal guardianship, when we began to feel the roughness outside the harbor.

Perhaps we did guide our craft with a reckless hand, and fought fate with a blind madness.

Perhaps many times evil overcame us by our ignorance, or it may have been at the moment we least expected, and was not prepared.

Was this evidence that we were a "cast-away?"

If not, why did the world so quickly give us the cold shoulder? And why was it so ready to condemn us?

Did the world care, or even pretend to know the relative strength of our struggles? No! And it was this that embittered our soul—endangered our chances of victory.

With a feeling that everybody and everything was against us, we struggled for a moral standing.

Our aim the world seemed to know not—nor care.

How many times we were sick and discouraged, and so many times trembling upon the brink.

Now that Providence has in part delivered us, our aim has to be to avoid placing stumbling-blocks in the way of any, and not to forget that among the surging mass are many immortal souls, and—though in the rough—many gems of rare beauty and worth that require but little help or attention from the world to give them a brilliancy that will lighten many dark corners of society.

Now as we look upon our boyish ambitions and dreams—our happy childhood days—our home, HOME, the only earthly symbol of Heaven—what if we do allow the tear to trickle silently down our cheek? Of this need we feel ashamed?

And it may be the memory of departed friends! those in whose lives ours and the past are linked.

And it may be the influence of their examples, so full of forbearance toward us, that softens our impetuous and perhaps hard nature, and strengthens and guides us to a more noble aim in life.

Perhaps those virtues—brightened by use, in memory, were left behind as our guiding-star.

Again, our aim will be to leave something behind us, that may make the world better for our having lived in it.

It is easy to preach, but so hard to practice—so hard to ignore self—so hard to observe those little things in everyday life which make real greatness—real men and women—real Christians.

CAPT. DALTON.

HAPPY LIFE.

THE happiest life a man can lead is one of honest labor, by which he can earn a living for himself and family, and lay up a trifle for the future. To keep the mind and body usefully employed is the summit of human happiness, for then there is no one to think or do evil. To lay by a little from week to week, and month to month, and year to year, adds to a man's happiness, because it is a guarantee against want if sickness or misfortune come, or business grows dull. But every thing beyond a reasonable increase of means is only an increase of care and temptation.

WHERE ARE THE ROSES?

BY LIZZIE DENNY.

Oh what has become of the beautiful roses
That were lately so blooming and gay?
Oh whisper, ye winds, of the spot that incloses
Their forms, that ye wore in your bosom away.

Or had you no pity, for the dear tree that bore them,
That you tore them so ruthlessly out of her arms?
Or is it a merciful love, to adore them
To such a degree, as to feast on their charms?

I asked of the zephyr to tell me the words,
That he used to entice them away
From the trembling bush, and the dear little birds
Who thrilled them sweet songs every day.

But the soft summer wind ran over the hills,
Gently kissing the bees 'mid the clover,
Just stooping to fan the calm brows of the will,
And ripple their smooth surface o'er.

Yet he sternly refused to reveal me the aught
Concerning the fate of my roses,
But as he stole from the braids of my hair, methought,
In his breath all their fragrance repeats.

Hearts, like the roses, are oft wooed and won
From the sheltering arms of home love,
And their fragrance destroyed, ere earth's work is
done.

But perhaps 'twill be finished above.

GUY SMYTHE,

The Reporter.

BY AOILE PENNE.

My name is Smythe—surname, Guy, and by profession I am a Reporter.

Of course every one knows what a reporter is, but few guess, when seated comfortably at their breakfast-tables, perusing the news contained in the morning journal, how much they owe that much abused and often slighted individual, the reporter.

Little do they dream of the sleepless nights, the personal peril incurred by the gatherer of news, the indefatigable and irrepressible reporter, solely that the great public may know what is going on in the world.

But to my purpose. I have taken the pen in hand, not to solicit sympathy, but to briefly tell of a personal adventure, and it happened in this wise.

At the house of a friend I became acquainted with a very lovely and intelligent girl. I say that she was intelligent, because she fully showed herself to be, by taking a strong liking to me from the first of our acquaintance.

She was the daughter of a retired merchant, who, on a snug little fortune, had settled down to enjoy life at a pretty little villa at Mount Vernon, out on the New Haven railway.

Through the daughter, I was introduced to the father. He was a jolly old fellow, and he and I fraternized at once. Bright visions floated through my mind. I saw myself a happy husband, and the retired merchant figured in the character of a father-in-law.

By the way, I have neglected to state that the old gentleman's name was Greenup, and that his charming daughter—the idol of my soul—about the sixteenth idol—rejoiced in the appellation of Josephine.

According to the terms of my engagement with the newspaper on whose "staff" I was enrolled, I was entitled to a month's vacation, commencing early in June. Happening to mention the fact to Mr. Greenup one day, that worthy gentleman, in the fullness of his heart, requested me to spend the time with him. Need I add that I accepted the invitation instantly? Here was a splendid opportunity to prosecute my suit for the hand of the lovely Josephine!

Behold me, then, one bright June morning, carpet-bag in hand, stepping on board of a Fourth avenue car, bound for the New Haven depot!

I arrived at the depot some thirty minutes before the time for the train to start—such was my impatience. So placing my carpet-bag on a seat in the waiting-room, I amused myself by strolling up and down the room, picturing inwardly to myself the glorious good time that I felt I was destined to enjoy.

While indulging in this joy-inspiring day-dream, my attention was attracted by a shabbily-dressed fellow carrying in his hand a black carpet-bag, similar to my own, who had just entered the apartment. If ever the word rogue was written plainly on a man's face, then the face of the new-comer bore the inscription. He seemed decidedly nervous, too, for he kept a watchful eye about him as though he expected that some one would pounce upon him at any moment and without warning.

As I was watching the singular movements of the stranger, he approached the ticket-window and bought a ticket to New Haven. I imitated his example and procured a ticket for Mount Vernon.

Then the seedy-looking stranger seized his carpet-bag and started in the direction of the baggage-room. I thought that it would be a good idea to get my carpet-bag checked; so, taking it, I followed him.

At the center of the baggage-room I placed my carpet-bag by the side of the stranger's and waited for the baggage-man—who was busy at the other end of the baggage-room—to attend to my baggage.

The stranger and I stood side by side, but his eyes were wandering restlessly around him. Suddenly he started.

"Oh, blazes!" he cried, in a tone of utter despair.

Astonished at the exclamation and the despairing tone, I looked in the direction of the outer door, toward which his gaze had been directed, to discover, if possible, the cause of his alarm.

There was a little knot of people—say eight or ten—entering, but I saw nothing in their appearance to justify the excitement or the exclamation of the stranger.

When I turned my attention from the door to the stranger, both he and his carpet-bag had disappeared. He had evidently jumped over the counter into the baggage-room and gone out that way.

While wondering at this strange circumstance the baggage-master approached, and, taking my bag in his hand, inquired:

"Where to, sir?"

"Mount Vernon," I answered, showing my ticket.

The baggage-master checked the carpet-bag and handed me the check. As I turned away I came face to face with a man dressed in dark clothes. He examined me from head to foot in one rapid, searching glance. Then he passed by me, and jumping over the counter, said something in a low tone to the baggage-master. I walked quietly away, but somehow the idea took possession of

me that the remark of the stranger to the baggage-master concerned me, so I kept my eyes upon the two.

Then the baggage-master pointed out something to the stranger; and from where I stood that something seemed to be my carpet-bag. The stranger, after looking at it carefully, jumped over the counter again and came out into the waiting-room.

A feeling of apprehension took possession of me. I kept my eyes on the stranger. He joined two other men who were standing together in one corner of the room, said a few words to them, then carelessly walked away. In a moment or two the two men that he had spoken to turned their attention to me. The care with which they watched me was perfectly alarming. It was done so nicely, too. I probably shouldn't have noticed it at all, if I hadn't been put on my guard by the actions of the first stranger at the baggage-counter.

I couldn't understand it at all, unless the three were thieves and had selected me as a victim; and I must say that three uglier, hang-dog-looking fellows I never set eyes on.

But I made up my mind that they should not take me unawares, so I kept my eyes upon them.

Then the doors were thrown open as a signal that the train was ready.

I took my place in one of the cars. As I had expected, the three fellows were all in my car. One was before me, another behind me, and the third right opposite. This was a pursuit with a vengeance.

Away went the cars, and all the way to Mount Vernon the three fellows kept their eyes upon me. Having penetrated their design I did not feel particularly alarmed; besides, I felt pretty sure that they would hardly dare to attack me in broad daylight. But, why on earth they should make me the object of such a persistent pursuit, I could not guess. I was not dressed particularly well—we reporters don't get astonishing salaries—and I was sure that there wasn't anything in my personal appearance that would be likely to lead any one to suspect that I had any thing very valuable about me.

In due time Mount Vernon was reached. I left the car, but the three never stirred. I came to the conclusion that they had given up the chase, and I must say that I felt thankful for the prospect of a hand-to-hand encounter with three such ugly-looking desperadoes was not particularly pleasant.

I got my carpet-bag and started for Mr. Greenup's residence. It was only a short distance from the depot. A walk of a few minutes brought me to it.

Father and daughter received me with open arms.

"We are just sitting down to dinner," said the old gentleman, "but we'll delay it until you fix yourself. I suppose you want to wash off the dust. Josy, show Mr. Smythe to his room."

And so Josy conducted me to a bedroom, right on the ground-floor and with windows looking into the garden.

"This is to be your room, Mr. Smythe," she said, with one of her charming smiles. "There's a bouquet of flowers that I picked with my own hand; I hope you'll appreciate it."

"Can you doubt that?" I asked, with a meaning glance that brought more roses into her cheeks than she had put into the bouquet.

"Don't be long," she said, retreating in confusion.

After she was gone I opened the carpet-bag, intending to get out another coat, for the one I was wearing was far too heavy for the warm June day. But as I opened the carpet-bag I was astonished. I took from that bag, first, a large chisel, then a small saw, then a bunch of skeleton keys, and, lastly, a good-sized revolver.

The truth flashed upon me in an instant. I had got hold of a burglar's kit. The shabbily-dressed fellow who had acted so strangely at the depot in the city had changed carpet-bags with me, either through accident or design.

It was destined to be a day of surprises to me, for I stood, lost in astonishment, holding the revolver in my hand and the tools of the burglar lying in a heap at my feet, through the open window from the garden came the three fellows who had watched me, first in the depot and afterward in the cars.

It was a bold attack. Mechanically—for I was totally bewildered by the sudden onslaught—I leveled the revolver at them. It went off, how I don't exactly know, for I hadn't the remotest idea that it was loaded and I don't remember cocking it, but some way—as I have said—it went off. Assault! No. I went over on my back with a howl of mortal anguish. I had evidently hit him somewhere. Then the other two flung themselves upon me. I struggled desperately, as any man would struggle when assaulted by such desperate ruffians.

Over we went in a heap on the little table, then the table gave way with a crash and we went on to the floor. Such a free fight I never saw before or since. The members of the Greenup household, alarmed, rushed into the room.

"What's the matter?" cried the old gentleman, in dismay.

"Oh, Guy!" came from the white lips of Josephine.

By this time, despite my heroic resistance, the three ruffians—for the first one, who had only got a revolver bullet in his shoulder, had come to the assistance of his comrades—had managed to get the best of me, and now held me helpless to the floor and sat on me to keep me quiet.

"We've got him!" cried No. 1, slipping a pair of handcuffs on my wrists.

"Got who?" exclaimed the old gentleman, in utter amazement.

"Why, 'Slim Jim,' the burglar," replied the fellow who had handcuffed me; "don't you see his tools?" and he pointed to the contents of the carpet-bag.

"What!" yelled Greenup, in consternation.

"Oh!" shrieked Josephine, and then she fainted in the arms of the cook, who took occasion to enliven the scene with a series of heart-rending howls.

"We're detective officers—we've tracked this fellow by his carpet-bag," continued the officer; "he's good for five years at Sing Sing."

And in spite of my remonstrances the officers carried me into town.

In New York, of course, I easily proved my identity and explained the change of the carpet-bags.

I was released, much to the disgust of the detectives.

The real Slim Jim was not caught. He had profited by the mistake, that threw the officers on my track, to make his way out of the reach of the agents of justice.

The unfortunate affair cost me a wife, for the charming Josephine never forgot the fright that I had been unlucky enough to cause, and took a dislike to me from that day forth.

I am still a reporter, and still in the market, as far as the matrimonial line is concerned.

How She Thwarted Them.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"He shan't do such a nonsensical thing! depend upon it, a stain never shall come on the proud old name of Lynn-Gordon if I can help it."

Any one would have seen how angrily earnest Mrs. Jay Lynn-Gordon was; her cheeks flushed to carmine brightness, her eyes fairly dancing with emotional rage.

She was a noble-looking woman, proud to excessive foolishness of her own and husband's name—she had been a Lynn-Gordon herself before she married her cousin Jay; generous in every respect save this overweening pride of name, and a very handsome, intelligent woman.

It was very seldom Mrs. Jay Lynn-Gordon was in a passion, and the few occasions were invariably from the same cause. But, this time her wrath rose mountains higher than ever before; and had she not a good reason, a reason that would have made any mother vexed even where family pride were not in the question?

"It is simply outrageous, Augusta," said Mrs. Lynn-Gordon's heavy silk—she never caught her in any thing less elegant than a gros-grain—rustled in sympathetic complaint.

She had spoken to her daughter, a beautiful girl, not yet nineteen, who inherited her mother's proud hauteur, and the far-famed Lynn-Gordon beauty; a tall, graceful girl, with peachy cheeks, a ripe red mouth, and delicious purple-black eyes, long and dreamy, just the tint of her hair, that was full of little rippling waves.

"You surely are not lending a tacit approval by your silence, Augusta?"

Mrs. Lynn-Gordon spoke in her most icy tones.

Augusta glanced up; a rapid, surprised light springing to her dark, oriental eyes.

"I approve of it? I consent to the dreadful sacrifice of seeing my only brother Gordon married to a common school-teacher?"

Miss Adrian was a gentle, ladylike girl, not at all like the Lynn-Gordons; but, very like the handsome, independent son.

Gordon and Lela Adrian had become very good friends from the very first, while mere

Mrs. Gordon Lynn-Gordon. An alliance with a school-teacher would be at once distasteful and impossible, even if an affection existed. Mrs. EUGENIA LYNN-GORDON.

She laid it down, and then a hand fell lightly, lovingly on her sunny hair.

"Ora, my grave little girl, are you ready for the ride?"

It was Gordon Lynn-Gordon's gay, brave voice, and Ora shivered as she heard it.

"What, no word of welcome, Ora? You are not crying?"

He finished the sentence suddenly, as she turned her pained face toward him.

"Mr. Lynn-Gordon, I must not go to the Glen with you to ride. I must never speak to you again."

She handed him the note. He took it unconsciously, still gazing in her face.

"Why, child, what do you mean?"

"Read that."

She laid her dainty little hand on his arm a moment, then turned away to the window.

An exclamation of anger escaped him; he dashed down the note and envelope, and went over to her.

"She is my mother, Ora, or I would say what I think. But, Ora, my own true, darling little betrothed, do you dream I care that, and he snapped his fingers defiantly, 'for what that letter says? I have asked you to marry me, because I love you, darling, and because you love me. Will you allow such a trifle to disturb us?'"

He smiled cheerily, and lifted her face to his breast.

"But, Gordon, she accuses me of 'maneuvering' to secure you."

"And so you have, your dear little pet, with your shy, sweet graces."

Gordon was trying to reassure her.

"But she forbids us—"

"Ora!"

Gordon confronted her—kindly, a little sternly.

"Ora, my darling, I am twenty-five years of age; I had a fortune from my deceased father; I love you. Will you re-promise to be my bride?"

He was looking straight at her, and her cheeks flushed under his loving scrutiny.

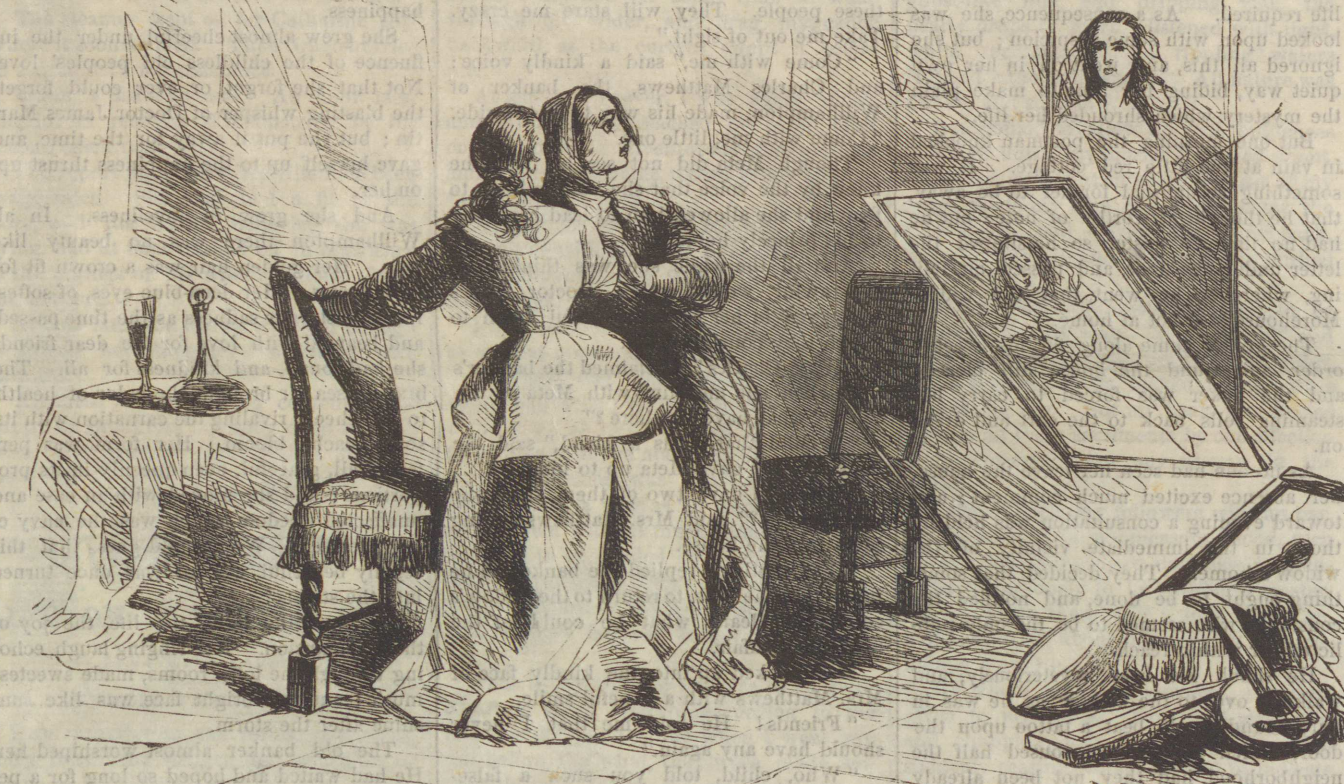
"I would, but—"

"No 'buts.' Will you?"

"Gordon, I love you so. Yes."

Miss Adrian was a gentle, ladylike girl, not at all like the Lynn-Gordons; but, very like the handsome, independent son.

Gordon and Lela Adrian had become very good friends from the very first, while mere



HOW SHE THWARTED THEM.

Why, more clever, where has your good opinion of me flown to?"

She let her eyes fall again to the gay worsted footstool she was fashioning.

"I didn't know but what you might have been influenced by Gordon's eloquence. He plead right skillfully for my consent. He need not ask it again; he need never expect to marry Ora Barton—a common village school-teacher! Oh, oh, the boy has gotten rid of his senses!"

Mrs. Lynn-Gordon's costly lace handkerchief was brought into requisition.

"Mamma," said Augusta, after a silence, "has Gordon ever seen Miss Adrian yet?—the heiress of Adrianstone, I refer to. She is very beautiful, very charming. Perhaps she would enchant him so that he would forget this Ora Barton; and you surely would not object to a marriage with General Adrian's daughter?"

Mrs. Lynn-Gordon's face lighted.

"I had never thought of that. My horror and mortification has been so keen at Gordon's indiscreteness, that I really thought of no cure for the trouble. But, do you write to her immediately, and let us set to work to break off the intimacy between Ora Barton and Gordon Lynn-Gordon."

The little village school had been dismissed, and a strangely refreshing quiet followed the last farewell shout of a tow-headed little urchin as he slammed the gate with a joyful bang.

Inside were rows of empty benches, and cut, scratched desks, decorated with slates and grim inkstands; at the end of the large room stood the teacher's desk, and in the high-backed chair sat Miss Barton, the teacher, her head bent wearily on the desk before her.

Outside were sweet scents of ripening buckwheat and fragrant clover; the waving shadows on the well-trodden grass, the low twittering of the robins that had built in the tall, spreading, black-heart cherry trees, just outside the school-house.

Altogether it was a soothing picture, but it brought no rest to the bowed girl at her desk. Soon she raised her head, and she saw her face—a fair, good face, with a pitiful quiver around the sweet womanly mouth, and a world of anguished trouble in the large gray eyes.

A letter lay open before her—or rather a note; with a dreamy, mechanical sort of manner she took it up, and reread it, in a low undertone:

"Miss Ora Barton will be good enough to cease her maneuvers to attract my son,

and secure looked on in delight at the growing intimacy.

Mrs. Lynn-Gordon attributed the good result to her extra management of Ora Barton; and Augusta wondered if Gordon had heard of the note mamma had written her.

Gordon made no sign of his knowledge, and he and Miss Adrian were inseparable friends in many a moonlight ride, walk and sail.

"Lela," said Miss Lynn-Gordon, one morning in early October, "you and Gordon seem great friends. How do you like him?"

Her questioning eyes were fixed on Miss Adrian's face.

"Like him, Augusta? I think he is very elegant and agreeable."

"Of course he is," returned the sister, proudly. "When ever was there a Lynn-Gordon that was not? But, I mean—I hoped you had fallen in love with him. I want a sister ever so bad, Lela."

Augusta smiled now at Lela's blushing cheeks.

"Oh, Gussie, pray do not mention such a thing. I'm sure Mr. Lynn-Gordon would despise me if he thought I was maneuvering to secure him. And, indeed, Augusta, I wouldn't do it."

What little Ora Barton was dreaming of her lover, he was to lose.

"Mother, will you sanction our betrothal?"

Gordon Lynn-Gordon and Lela Adrian, her sweet face covered with blushes, bowed before the laughing matron. A cry of exultant delight broke from her.

"I delightedly give it. Heaven bless you, my son, my daughter."

Gordon smiled brightly up in her face as she spoke.

And if Lela were to become suddenly poor—if she felt able to keep her good heart and sweet face! They're won me, Gordon."

"And you, Gussie, will accept her for your sister?"

Augusta kissed her warmly.

"And now, mother, Lela, and Gussie: suppose we have a quartette in the music-room?"

He gave Lela his arm, and his mother and sister followed.

It was a spacious saloon, covered with soft pink plushy carpet; with a grand piano, an organ, and several smaller musical instruments scattered about in graceful confusion.

A number of pictures and portraits hung

on the wall, and a small marble console stood between the windows.

After several songs, Lela begged to be excused a moment, and Gordon escorted her to the door, then returned. Mrs. Lynn-Gordon and Augusta were standing near the window as Gordon came up to them.

"Mother, sister, I have a slight surprise in store for you. Are you ready for it? It is a life-size portrait of my future wife, whom you have both agreed to love and accept."

He stepped to a portrait that hung on the wall, and drew it slowly away. There, in her sweet, grave and pleading beauty was Ora Barton! not a picture, but her own veritable self, standing in the niche Gordon had prepared.

Mother and daughter sprung back in horrified alarm.

"Gordon, what does this mean?"

Her cheeks flamed in an instant, while Augusta frowned haughtily.

Lela Adrian's soft voice answered them:

"It means only this, Mrs. Lynn-Gordon: you have been deceived. When you sent for Miss Adrian, your son also wrote her a noble, manly letter stating why you wished her presence. She came, resolved to aid him in marrying the girl he loved. Every thing was prearranged, and at the depot Ora Barton and Lela Adrian exchanged identities. It means simply this: I am not Lela Adrian, whom you never saw, but only heard of, but Ora Barton, whom you also never saw but heard much of. You have known me as Miss Adrian—yonder is the true Miss Adrian."

As Ora ceased speaking the figure descended from the frame.

"Gordon, have you dared—"

But Mrs. Lynn-Gordon's voice was choked; she dared not speak.

"Forgive me, dear madam, the innocent deception. And since I have not before seen you, permit me to offer my kind inquiries after your health; also to state I intend to make Ora a wedding-gift that even your son may not scorn to take. Ora is to-day an heiress."

It ended all right, after all; and Mrs. Lynn-Gordon actually discovered the Bartons were once a royal family; the great Dumbartons of Scotland.

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And his thoughts involuntarily took the form of words.

"How very, very beautiful you are, Meta." She started in alarm, and colored to the temples.

"You are exquisitely lovely," he added, paying no attention to her indignant looks.

She now arose to leave the room, but the doctor forcibly detained her.

"Does it then anger you so to speak of your beauty?" he sneered. "Well, I'll not mention it. But I have come for a purpose to-night. When I last honored you with a visit, you remember that I promised to come only once more. This is the time, unless, indeed, you have altered your decision."

"Which I have not," said Meta, haughtily.

"No, I did not expect it. I merely mentioned it to satisfy any little doubts I might have. But, you know, Meta, that one can not bear such disappointment without some little revenge."

Meta gave a quick, startled look, but the mocking face revealed nothing of the thoughts within.

"Tell me the worst at once!" she implored. But Doctor James looked coldly down into the pallid, beseeching face, and went on in his own way.

"When I took you from the streets—when I took you from the woman you called mother—"

Ah! how he gloried in torturing her, now that he knew that he had nothing more to hope for.

"My mother!" she whispered, reverently. "What of her?" "Oh! Doctor James, you have some pity?" "Tell me of her!"

But he had no pity. What cared he for the beautiful face upturned to his so full of supplication? What, though, she crazed? what, though she died? Ah! died?

"When I brought you here, Meta," he went on, "it was merely an act of kindness; but, as you grew in beauty, I grew to like you. I gave you every advantage that wealth could bestow, but I have, to some extent, deprived you of your liberty. It was because of my selfish love. I wanted you all to myself. But, you have rejected me; you have shown ingratitude; and now I turn you into the streets again—back into the streets where I found you—into the streets—the streets! Do you hear? without a home, a name, or a friend!"

His voice had risen to an angry pitch, between a shout and a shriek, and Meta, shrinking with dread, and trembling with fear, made one desperate effort to break away from him; but his hold was firm.

"The streets—the streets!" he hissed, his teeth gnashing, and great purple seams of rage athwart his face. "Into the streets, with you—mother! Ha! ha!"

"With my mother?" asked Meta, sinking her voice to a whisper, for she could not speak that name without a feeling of holy reverence. "Only tell me of her, and I can willingly, gladly leave all this wealth with which you have sought to buy my love, and go into the streets to toil with her and for her."

Doctor James gave her a look that froze all her anticipated joy to the direst dread.

"Remember that it is your own seeking," said he. "But I shall require your oath that, whatever may happen, your lips shall be sealed in relation to your past life—to me—to every thing, from the moment you leave this house. You shall be as one awakening from a deep sleep, knowing nothing of the past."

"I will swear," said Meta.

He took a Bible from the table. He knew that Meta held that book sacred.

"Place your hand upon this book," said he, "and when I repeat the conditions, swear that you will faithfully abide by them."

In a mocking tone he proceeded; and Meta, holding the matter in too sacred a light to be influenced by his levity, solemnly repeated the words after him.

When it was all finished to his satisfaction, Meta looked up hopefully into his face.

"Do not keep me waiting," she implored.

He laughed derisively.

"What a pity that I have not pleasant words to whisper in your ear; but, you know I must have my little revenge. I will not harm the body. Oh, no! I do not brave the law. My revenge will strike deeper than that. It shall hang a menacing terror over you, until you are carried to your grave! It shall blast all hope, crush all pride, and burden your heart with such wretched misery, that you will call for death! You will be shunned by the good, derided by the wicked, and become a thing hateful even to yourself!"

He laughed tauntingly, and bent his malignant gaze upon Meta, who stood gazing at him, bewildered by his horrid mockery.

"Tell me!" she gasped.

And putting his lips close to her ear, he whispered his revenge.

Alas for Meta! It was like a thunder-burst, which deafens and tortures, but does not kill. The muscles grew rigid; the blood seemed stagnant; the eyes were stony; the lips deathly white, and the brain in such a whirl, that she caught at the table for support.

"False as your own false heart!" she said, in a husky voice. "Satan himself could not conceive a more fiendish untruth! I will not believe it. Coward! to

seek such revenge! Oh, take my life, but tell me that you have spoken falsely!"

"Thank you, Miss Meta, but I wish you to live and enjoy this knowledge," sneered the tormentor. "No one will strive harder to keep you out of the grave than your very sincere friend, Doctor James Martin. As for the truth of my words, my dear child, I must say that I pride myself upon my veracity."

They gazed into each other's eyes; she, with a deeper repulsion for the reptile which he had proved himself, and a sickening horror that was worse than death; and he, with a livid face, and a wicked smile on his lips, fatal as the deadly upas. "Sworn enemies!" he hissed, as he took a step toward her, and seized her with a vice-like grip. Then, ere she comprehended his intentions, he pressed a sponge to her mouth and nostrils, and waited until she became a dead weight in his arms.

He smiled grimly.

"Fool!" he muttered. "Does she think this is all done for paltry revenge? Let her think so."

He raised her in his arms, and bore her out of the house to a close carriage in waiting.

"Drive! drive!" he shouted. "We have no time to waste now."

CHAPTER II.

OUT IN THE STREETS.

A good day's journey from the city was the thriving little seaport town of Willamington. It was an everyday sort of a place, never having any excitement more startling than a traveling circus, or the capsizing of a fishing-smack; but it was destined to have a first-class sensation—a mystery of appearance and disappearance, that the shrewdest could not fathom.

In a little red cottage down by the beach, lived the widow Morehouse. Since her first appearance in Willamington, she had led a quiet, secluded life, holding no intercourse with her neighbors, and only venturing abroad long enough to purchase the few necessities that her simple mode of life required. As a consequence, she was looked upon with some suspicion; but she ignored all this, and went on in her own quiet way, biding her time to make plain the mystery which shrouded her life.

But one morning the postman knocked in vain at the little red cottage. It was something so unusual for her to be away, that he thought it worthy of note; but he had no time to waste; so he slipped the letter under the door, and passed on, telling, wherever he went, that the widow Morehouse was not at home.

The grocer came along for his weekly order, and found the house still closed; and the baker was forced to carry his steaming rolls back to the cart and drive on.

As no one had seen her leave the house, her absence excited much comment; and toward evening a consultation was held by those in the immediate vicinity of the widow's home. They decided that something ought to be done, and notified the constable, who seemed to be the only public officer within reach.

He shook his head mysteriously, and walking over to the cottage, as he was in duty bound to do, beat a tattoo upon the door, which would have roused half the neighborhood, had they not been already wide awake. There was no response, and he tried again. Yet all was silent within the house, save the echoing of his thundering raps.

Then he turned to the crowd that had gathered, and made more particular inquiries; but he elicited no further information, except that one man was very positive that some time in the night he heard a carriage drive up and go away again.

"Well, my friends," said the constable, putting on a very knowing face, which became him, "well, it is my belief that there has been foul play here, and I feel it my duty to burst in the door. Bring me a crowbar."

The required lever was soon placed in his hands, and after a short speech to the admiring crowd, in which he dwelt largely upon his duty, he forced an entrance.

The people now surged up to the door to see the horrid sight which all believed was there, but the officer, in the name of the law, ordered them back. Then he called two men out of the crowd, and leaving one to guard the entrance, he took the other in with him.

He reappeared almost immediately, and to have answered all the questions put to him would have required a wiser head than his. But he was equal to the occasion. With a majestic wave of the hand, he commanded silence, and called for his wife.

The good woman was near at hand, and with a pardonable pride, soon disappeared within the mysterious portals of the red cottage.

Again the constable came to the door, and called for a doctor, "without delay." The half-frantic people now crowded the man at the door so hard that he was obliged to call for assistance; and when the doctor arrived, he found much difficulty in reaching the house.

He had heard all that was known of the affair, and exhibited as much curiosity as any of them; but he was not prepared for what he saw. Instead of the ghastly form of the widow Morehouse, weltering in her blood, he found, lying on the bed, the insensible form of a beautiful girl.

"Mercy! what is this!" he exclaimed, hastening to the bedside, and taking one of the limp hands in his own.

"You know as much about it as we do, doctor. Is she dead?"

"Drugged. I will give her something that will soon bring her to."

The medicine had the desired effect; and the girl opened her eyes, and stared wildly about her.

"Where am I?" she asked, rising on her elbow. "Who are you?"

"We were searching for the widow Morehouse, and found you," said the constable.

"Morehouse! I know nothing of her. Have I been dreaming?"

"Probably," said the doctor. "Now, can you tell me who you are?"

"Oh, yes; I am Meta," she replied, in a dazed sort of a way.

Yes, it was Meta, turned into the streets again, without a home, a name, or a friend; the victim of Dr. James Martin's "little revenge."

"But how came you here?" asked the doctor.

"I can not tell," said Meta, trying to put her bewildered thoughts into shape. Then she remembered Doctor James, and with a shudder, turned her face to the wall, and burst into tears.

The constable's wife looked pityingly upon her, but she could not understand it. All at once she started in alarm.

"She has fainted, doctor!"

"Then we must carry her into the air," said the doctor. "It is too close and gloomy here."

The wondering crowd outside were all huddled up around the door, but when the doctor appeared with Meta in his arms, they drew back awe-stricken. The beautiful, ghost-like form seemed to them to have come from another world, and they gave her a wide berth.

The cool air soon revived the poor girl, and she stood up, hiding her face from the gaping crowd.

"Take me back to the house!" she implored. "I can not bear the gaze of all these people. They will stare me crazy. Take me out of sight."

"Come with me," said a kindly voice; and Charles Matthews, the banker of Willamington, made his way to Meta's side. "Come with me, little one."

Though Meta did not see his face, she knew by the voice that she had nothing to fear, and she allowed him to lead her away to his princely home.

And all the while she was thinking of the awful words which Doctor James whispered in her ear—the awful doom to which they consigned her.

"Why, Charles!" exclaimed the banker's wife, when she met him with Meta at the door, "what have you here?"

"A child that needs a friend," said the banker, as he gave Meta up to his wife.

"She shall have two of them, shall she not, Charles?" said Mrs. Matthews, taking Meta into the house.

"Yes, mother," replied the banker, as he passed out the gate, to return to the widow's cottage, to learn what he could of the mysterious affair.

Meta looked up into the kindly face of Mrs. Matthews with a hopeful smile.

"Friends! He told me that I never should have any again."

"Who, child, told you such a falsehood?"

"Oh, what have I done?" exclaimed Meta, in dismay. "Please don't ask me any more. My name is Meta, and that is all I must tell you. When are you going to drive me into the streets again?"

Mrs. Matthews held up her hands in horror.

"We are not heathens!" said she. Then she became heartily ashamed of herself, and clasping the poor child to her bosom, she said:

"Never, Meta! you shall stay with us always."

"Oh, no!" said Meta, sadly, yet nestling closer to the good woman. "That can not be. You do not know all, and I must not tell you. If you will let me stay to-night, I will go away in the morning."

"No, no, my child!" said Mrs. Matthews. "Would you not like to stay with me?"

"Oh, yes; but I must not. I must go away where I can forget every thing."

"Tell me your troubles," said the banker's wife, again drawing Meta to her.

"You want a friend?"

"So much, Mrs. Matthews; but even to a friend I can not unburden my heart. I can not break my promise. You will not ask me?"

"But you will tell me your name?"

"I know none but Meta."

"Strange! and you do not know how you came to be in Mrs. Morehouse's cottage?"

"I must know nothing of the past," she replied, sadly. "Only the future is open to me, and what a future!"

"Then, Meta, we take you as you are," said the banker's wife, impressed by her simplicity, that, whatever the wrong, this poor child was not to blame. "Knowing nothing—asking nothing of the past, Meta."

"Oh, will you?" exclaimed Meta, joyfully. Then the old look of despair came back to her face.

"You know not what you are saying, my dear friend. I must not listen to you. I will go away in the morning, and you must forget that you ever saw me."

"We will wait until morning comes, dear."

CHAPTER III.

THE BANKER'S WARD.

The banker was puzzled. So was Willamington generally. Puzzled at Mrs. Morehouse's disappearance, and at Meta's no less strange appearance.

A detective came down from the city. He looked the red cottage all over; asked innumerable questions; and worried poor Meta nearly to distraction. Then he went away again. But he left his opinion, which was, that the widow went away of her own free will; and that if there was any foul play, it was in Meta's case, and must be looked up outside of Willamington.

Yet there was the mystery. None were satisfied. The old sexton, who was supposed to know more of ghosts and transmutations than any other living man, advanced a theory of his own; that the widow Morehouse was Meta in disguise, and that she would change into something else some time. Improbable as it seemed—yet stranger than that is sometimes truth—it was believed by some; while the incredulous, seeing no possible solution of the mystery, gradually dismissed the subject from their minds.

The little red cottage was locked up, and left to await the return of its owner.

All this while Meta was with her new friends, the banker and his wife. That first night had been passed in such refreshing slumber; and when the morning came, the banker and his wife would not let her go. They persuaded her to remain with them at least a week, yet she felt all the time that she was doing them a great injury.

When the week went by, she had been so much happier than she had ever dared to hope, that when Mrs. Matthews told her that she must yet stay a little longer, she said:

"You are so good to me, that I dread to go away. Where else shall I find such dear friends?"

"You must not look for them, dear Meta. Stay with us always."

And Meta again yielded to the tempting happiness.

She grew almost cheerful under the influence of the childless old peoples' love. Not that she forgot, or ever could forget, the blasting whisper of Doctor James Martin; but she put it away for the time, and gave herself up to the happiness thrust upon her.

And she grew in loveliness. In all Willamington there was no beauty like hers. Her golden hair was a crown fit for an empress. Her deep-blue eyes, of softest luster, lost their sadness as the time passed, and beamed with love for the dear friends she had found, and kindness for all. The bracing sea air brought the color of health to her cheeks, rivaling the carnation with its soft, peachy bloom. Her form was perfect; tall, graceful, even queenly in its proportions; and she moved with an ease and unaffected freedom which was the envy of half her sex. Who would guess that this regally beautiful woman was once turned into the streets?

She was the light, the life, the joy of the old mansion. Her ringing laugh, echoing through the lofty rooms, made sweetest music; and her bright face was like sunshine after the storm.

The old banker almost worshipped her. He had waited and hoped so long for a pet of his own, and now one had been given him. He would have spoiled her by his indulgence, but for her own good sense. His wife was none the less infatuated; but, while she loved the beautiful waif, she watched her with a mother's care, that no more ill should come to her. She had received her in all thankfulness, and must render a strict account of her stewardship.

When George Matthews—the banker's nephew, who had lived with his uncle since boyhood—returned to Willamington, he was all unprepared for the surprise that awaited him. The glory of Meta's wondrous beauty burst upon his vision like the radiance of the noonday sun, dazzling at first with its splendor; but as the eye becomes accustomed to the brilliancy, and finds pleasure in it, so did George Matthews' soul drink in the pleasure—the joy of the resplendent vision.

"For heaven's sake, uncle, who is that 'Thalia' that I see walking in the park?" he exclaimed.

"That is Meta," said the banker, with a fond smile. "I haven't told you about her. But she is coming this way."

Meta, wholly unconscious of the admiring looks that were watching her every motion, approached very near before she saw them. She flushed a little when she saw the stranger.

"We have been waiting for you to come up," said the banker. "This is my nephew, George Matthews."

George Matthews was an accomplished man of the world—a cynic, mayhap, looking upon all women as so many seekers after husbands, as something to be admired for their beauty—to be tolerated for custom's sake; but as he bowed before this Meta, he felt that fulsome flattery would be out of place with her. He simply said:

"I am happy to meet you, Miss—"

The hot blood mounted to Meta's face at his hesitation, and a flash of pain, but she promptly gave him the cue.

"Meta is my name," said she, wrapping herself about with an impenetrable shield of dignity.

"You shall take mine," said the banker, quickly. "I have been quite thoughtless. But, Meta, what's in a name?" he added, playfully.

"Much in the possession," she replied, pale with inward anguish.

Then she passed them, and went to her room to sob out the withering pain at her heart.

The advent of George Matthews made an entire change in Meta's life. The cynic had found one object that was above contempt, and he applied himself diligently to the following of this new aim—to the winning of Meta's love.

Meta could not remain ignorant of his admiration, nor wholly ignore his attentions, but she strove to discourage him, without seeming to do so. Had she cared for him it would have been even worse; for there was that hideous secret, shutting her out from all love, suspended over her, a never-ceasing terror, following her wherever she went, a sleuth-hound of revenge.

George Matthews, in his love-blindness and excessive egotism, closed his heart against her mute appeals, and spared her not. And the banker and his wife marked the growing pallor of their pet, but never guessed the cause of her unhappiness.

"I must not stay here!" she murmured, as she sat in the darkness of her own room, thinking of the past—that past closed to all but herself. "Oh, that a veil of tenfold thickness might forever shut it out forever from my sight," she moaned.

"I must go! Out into the streets again—homeless, nameless, friendless!"

How the words rung in her ears, buzzing, hissing through her brain, until it seemed like molten lava.

"Driven away by love, followed by my misery, haunted by his revenge; yes, I must go!"

The teeth set hard against each other; the hand clenched fiercely the chair she sat in; the brow grew seamed and rigid; and the eyes looked the torture she was enduring.

Hastily gathering a little bundle of clothing, she donned her hat and stepped softly into the passage. How the very boards creaked with her light weight; and the rustling of the carpet seemed bidding her to go back. Back? To the wretchedness? She kept on, and when she was out in the cool darkness she felt better.

Out through the leafy shades, and along the walk to the gate. Hark! Was that a step? Perhaps the echo of her own soft footfall on the velvet greensward.

"Where now, Meta?"

"George Matthews!"

Yes, he was in the path before her; and she felt his penetrating gaze, though she could see nothing but the dim outline of his form.

"Where can you be going, Meta?"

With a little wail of despair, such as he never expected to hear from her, she fled back to the house—back to her misery.

Yet she thanked him, for she saw how wicked her thoughts had been.

"Saved from the streets again! Rescued from—oh, I dare not think it! Fly where I might, this torture would haunt me! Why not brave it here? I will gird myself with a mantle of fortitude, and defy my fate!"

After that she met George Matthews with the same chilling reserve, but she could no more withstand his searching looks. She had lost power. She had given him a hold upon her that he never would release. Might it not ultimately cause his triumph?

Our Ballads.

AT ALCOLEA.

At Alcolea, royalist,
And rebel met in fight;
And face to face they sternly stood,
Mid the battle's flash of light:
As whistled by the musket-shot,
(Death's messages returned),
And in many a wound, by soldier felt,
Death's fever hotly burned.

In Spain, beneath her glorious sky,
The battle hotly raged;
And children of a common clime
In contest stern engaged.

But lo! as swift and deadly flew
The missiles on their way,
A soldier sees his body marked,
By one intent to slay—
Perceives his body covered by
A royalist; and sees
Aur his brother's raven hair
Tossed in the blowing breeze.

And suddenly each recognized
The other—dropped the gun—
And each, with "Brother" on his lips,
Did to the other run.

Their lots had long been lives apart;
And now all overcome
They met in mutual embrace,
From joy excessive dumb.

Alas! the bliss, as when a wave
Upon the fevered brow
Refreshes it, then hurls a life
Quenched of its warmth below.
Was drowned in death—a bullet sped
Unmeant, and to the breast
Of Frank, the royalist, it marked
A passage through his vest.

Red flowed the living tide of blood,
And, with a struggle, passed
Away the spirit to its rest—
Freed from its throes at last.

Thus in the loving arms of him,
Whom he had almost slain,
The royalist gave up his life
On Alcolea's plain.

J. G. MANLY, JR.


BY ROGER STARRBUCK

The wheel did not make an entire revolution. It turned half-way. Her's was a fearful situation. Should *that wheel revolve* how fearful must be her fate! She would be literally beaten to pieces!

I looked around. I was at the bottom
of the rapid, but not out of the tumultuous

for they cowered close to my feet and looked about uneasily.

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1

THE POET.

BY JOE POT, JR.

The poet is of high degree,
But lowly for all that,
He wears a look that is divine,
And an old slouchy hat.
The very birds tune up their song
Whenever he's about;
He drinketh inspiration in,
And wears his elbow out.
He looks on nature's fair domains,
And sings where'er he goes,
'Tis said his verse will sometimes wash,
But that he never does.
On shady banks and rippling streams
His heart is kindly set,
And he is never out of rhyme—
And seldom out of debt.
He plucks from out the skies the stars
And weaves them in his verse,
He's very rich in sentiment,
And very poor in purse.
He often meets with jeers and scorn,
And hears unfriendly talk;
His fancy flies on airy wings,
But he's obliged to walk.
He sings his pleasures to the world,
He also sings his pain;
But to maintain himself and fame
He's always on a strain.
His rhythmic feet are finer clad
Than his poetic toes,
And he frequently comes out in print,
And frequently in clothes.

Walled Up.

BY C. DUNNING CLARK.

Night in the great city. The rush of passing men and women, Jew and Gentile, wise men and foolish virgins, had passed away, and was succeeded by the hush which always followed an hour after the theaters were closed. Here and there a bevy of young men, with disordered clothing and faces rendered imbecile by drink, went staggering by, making night hideous with their bacchanalian songs until brought up by the vision of a "boy in blue," with a shield upon his breast. Now and then women, with faces which showed wan and ghastly under the lamps, passed by—faces which had been beautiful in their day, perhaps the pride of happy homes—women such as "George Ellington" describes so faithfully.

A close carriage rolled down Broadway, and turned into Houston street, stopping at a house which, to the passer-by unused to the ways of this great city, might seem a very respectable place indeed. Two men descended and entered the lofty hall, lighted by a brilliant chandelier suspended from the ceiling. They passed on up the stair and entered a small room, where they found the various paraphernalia in use in secret societies, and, among others, black masks and long cloaks. When prepared, they approached a door and knocked. It swung open and showed a man dressed in all respects as they were, holding in his hand a bright sword.

"Who demands entrance here?" he said, in a hollow voice.

"Those who know the sign and the word," replied one of the men in the same tone.

"Give me one," said the mask.

The young men placed themselves in a peculiar position and gave the sign together, raising their hands to their heads, and placing them upon the ears as if to shut out every sound.

"Can you hear?" demanded the mask.

"Nothing but the voice of a brother."

"Are you dumb?"

"Yes. Except when the Grand Organizer bids us speak."

"You have spoken well. Remain until I have whispered in the ear of the Grand Organizer that worthy brothers stand at the gate."

The door closed behind them, and they were left alone in the ante-room.

"What is the matter with you, George?" demanded one of the men. "You are trembling."

"I have received a summons I dare not disobey. I am afraid they mean to try Gerald to-night for his misdemeanor. Do you think they would dare to carry out the oath, if it were proved against him?"

"I am afraid they would. Hush! here comes the outside guard."

"Enter," cried the same stern voice. The door swung noiselessly back and showed them a lighted hall draped in sable. Black sofas were grouped about in order, upon which were seated men in the same somber robes they wore. Upon the four sides of the room were raised seats holding high-backed, dark-cushioned chairs, in which were seated men, each of whom wore a silver circlet and insignia on his neck, symbolical of his office. The one on the west an ax; on the south a dagger; on the north a cord; on the east a sharp sword. The last wore a sort of tiara of diamonds and gold, and was evidently the principal officer. Others of various ranks stood or sat at points where they were easily subject to the orders of the officers.

In the center was a raised altar, upon which lay a human skull with thigh-bones crossed before it, a cord, a dagger, an ax, and a sword. All the hangings, and even the floor of the room, were black. The two men advanced to the altar and made the same sign which they had made before, and the Grand Organizer recognized them by touching the sword upon his breast. Just then came a loud knocking at the inner door of the room, and a man upon the right of the chief officer sprang to his feet.

"I hear a sound at yonder gate, Worthy Organizer."

"Hasten to it and let me know the cause," replied the chief.

The member walked with a military step to the door and opened it. A man stood there clothed in a long white robe, with his eyes closely bandaged, attended by two masks.

"What seek ye here?"

"Brother Gerald Swayne, who has been accused before the Grand Council, is here to purge himself from stain or suffer the penalty."

The deputy seized a black cord which was fastened about the neck of the prisoner, and led him in. The door closed behind him with a dull sound. As he heard it he started and seemed to meditate flight, but manned himself by a strong effort and looked boldly at his enemies.

"Give him a seat," said the Grand Organ-

izer, sternly. A chair was brought and placed before the altar, facing the chief officer.

"Brother," said that officer, "you stand here charged with a grave crime, and one which bears the heaviest penalties. You know the mysteries of our order and that we live by the virtues and follies of the world. It is not necessary that I should tell them to you. Enough that in the eyes of the world, in their specious philosophy, the kindness each brother does to his fellow brother would be regarded as a crime and so punished by their laws. What of that? We keep our secrets by certain laws, and those laws must be inviolate. Listen. Do you remember your oath?"

"I do."

"What did you swear?"

"To keep holy the secrets of the Grand Council, to obey nothing but the orders of the Grand Organizer, and to do these without a murmur."

"It is well. Yesterday I sent you an order. Have you fulfilled it?"

"I have not."

"Why did you hesitate?"

"Because you asked me to do something not in my power to perform."

"Listen, brothers," said the Grand Organizer. "This man is of the order of Adam and he loves a woman. For the sake of the order it became necessary that he should marry one we had chosen, and who loved him well enough to take him. We imposed no hard task upon him, for the woman we had chosen was beautiful, and, what was better far, was possessed of great wealth. The woman he loved and for whose sake he would have sacrificed the interests of this Grand Council, was beautiful, but poor. He has some chimerical idea of living a life of innocence hereafter—of breaking away from the Grand Council, and in some lovely spot living out a blameless life. You know the cant they use. Enough of this, do you still refuse to obey the orders of the Grand Council, and marry the woman they have chosen?"

"I do."

"It is well. Brothers, ye who think this brother worthy of the doom, raise your right hand on high, before us all."

One man alone hesitated—the brother of the unfortunate prisoner. But, his friend seized his arm and dragged it up.

"Fool!" he whispered. "Would you share his fate?"

"I care not."

"Up with your hand."

The young man hesitated and finally raised his hand. The Organizer nodded in a meaning way and rose. "Brothers," he said, "ye have pronounced the doom. Desist in peace, and leave it to me and my deputies to do your will."

They filed slowly out, leaving Gerald sitting like a statue, moving no muscle, but looking at the Grand Organizer with a fixed stare.

"We understand each other, Caspar Guilderstein," he said. "You coveted my one ewe lamb, and so I must fall. Do your worst."

The man called Caspar Guilderstein took his arm upon one side and his deputy upon the other and led him down a narrow stairway to the first floor, crossed a dark hall and entered a room by a blindfold and bound hand and foot. The man was in working clothes and evidently a laborer. One of the men cut his bonds and assisted him to rise, taking the bandage from his eyes at the same time. For the first time the masks drew a pistol, and while one guarded Gerald, the other clapped a pistol to the head of the laborer, while his companion held up a dark lantern.

"Now, my man, listen to me. I am a man of few words. You are a bricklayer, are you not?"

"I am. For God's sake, gentlemen, why have I been kidnapped to this place?"

"You were brought here to do a certain job. You see that hole in the wall yonder. We want it walled up."

He pointed with his pistol to the cavity, and the bricklayer saw that there was an opening about two feet wide or eight feet. A portion of the inner wall had been taken out, and the bricks now lay upon the ground with a box of mortar.

"That's easy enough," replied the man. "I'd have been glad to do the job for you anyhow. You needn't have kidnapped me and tied me neck and heels."

"When the job is completed you will receive a hundred dollars," said Guilderstein. "Go in, Gerald. Hat do you see it now?"

A living grave yawns to receive you. In this tomb you will lie and howl your life away. Let this teach you when you pit your poor faculties against those of Caspar Guilderstein, you act the part of a fool. Go in."

Without a word Gerald Swayne stepped into the cavity and sat down.

"Wait a moment, Caspar Guilderstein," he said. "You know that I love Mira Stewart dearly. For her sake I refused to bend to the will of the council, for her sake I die."

Do not dare to vilify me to her, for if the soul disembodied is permitted to return to earth, mine shall follow you night and day and never let you rest."

"Cease, or I will gag you," cried the scoundrel. "To your work, laborer. Dare to refuse and I will put a bullet in your brain and do the work myself."

"You dare not fire," replied the bricklayer. "It would alarm the street."

"These double walls and padded floors carry but little sound," replied the mask, angrily. "To your work. There is mortar; it was brought yesterday. Go on."

"It is murder."

"Bah! Go on."

With two pistols leveled at his head, the laborer went trembling to work and laid up the bricks swiftly, while Gerald, overcome by the terrible nature of his danger, sat with bowed head while brick after brick was laid in its place by the workman. Higher and higher the wall rose, one of the men holding the lantern in his left hand and the pistol in the other, while Guilderstein with his finger on the trigger of his weapon pointed out to the workman what to do. When the last brick was laid they again bound and blindfolded the workman, led him up stairs, put him in a cab, and after driving a devious course to the pavement in Front street and drove rapidly away.

And Gerald? His first sensations, when certain that he was entombed alive, were those of utter despair. Perhaps in the after years, when the old house fell, some one would discover his bones and ponder on the disturbed remains and wonder how they were laid in this strange resting-place. He managed to free his hands, and rose. He tried the wall; it stood firm. Again and again he put his shoulder against it, and exerted all his strength, but in vain. He sunk down in despair when his hand rested upon something which felt cold and hard. Lifting it he felt that it was a short bar of iron with a pointed end. How it came there he did not try to speculate, but hope again sprung up in his breast. He pried away with all his strength. The wall had been well built, and he was about to drop the bar, for the narrow space was already infected, and he could scarcely breathe, when he felt a brick shake under the point of the bar. Putting all his remaining strength into the effort, he forced the brick outward, and to his joy heard it fall with a dull sound into the cellar. A current of fresh air poured in at the opening. He was saved! Sinking up

on his knees in the place which might have been his tomb, he vowed to live an honest life henceforth, doing justice by his fellow-men. When his strength came back he rose, beat down the wall and escaped from his tomb.

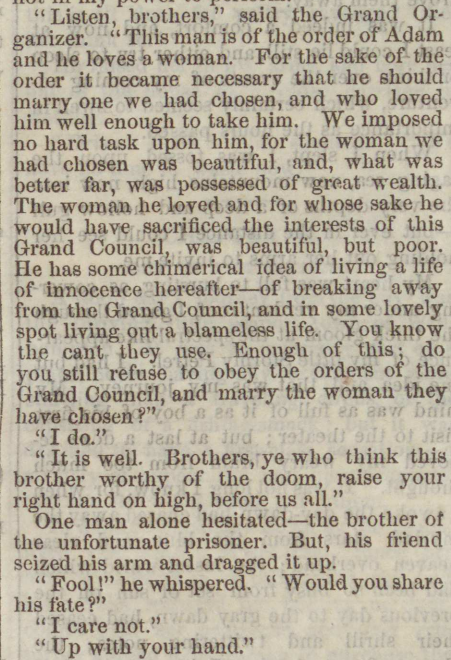
In the darkness, knowing the house well, he managed to escape from the building and lay in hiding for three days. At the end of that time he sent a note to his brother detailing his escape and asking him to come. To his surprise, when his brother appeared, after congratulating him on his escape, he was told that he could go out with safety.

"The Grand Council dissolved last night by mutual consent. The properties have been destroyed. Guilderstein and his brother, the head and front of our evil league, are dead. Yesterday, in the fall of a building in Water street, they were buried in the ruins. Let us thank God, and lead better lives."

So Gerald came out of his hiding-place, breathing more freely. That day he went to Mira Stewart, the girl he loved, and told her that he had led a wicked life, but with her aid would try to be a man from that hour. She believed him and they were married.

Next day they took the steamer for San Francisco, and in that strong new State built up a new name, second to none in that land of progress. But the secrets of that night, and the true history of the Grand Council, are still a mystery, for all the members kept their oaths.

WALLED UP.



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"Ye may talk 'bout the spite o' anymals, an' most people b'lieve that's none more spitefuller than a grizzly. I tell ye, young fellers, that ere's a grand mistake. Bar's bad enough when riz; but you jess get up the dander o' a buffer bull, at that sezzen when they're rummin' arter the cows, and see whether you'll get it down ag'in till ye've eyther throwed the critter in his tracks, or made tracks yerself, so's to put safe space atween you an' ole bully. Ginrally speakin', the buffer air a dull brute, tho' not high so much as he looks. Ef it wa'n't for the long ha'r that tufts out over thar eyes, it'd be attacked. This sort o' blinds them, an' g'ies a chance o' gettin' the start o' 'em on turn-in'. But then, if there's no kiver or anythin' 'ceptin' yerself upon the paraira, they'll soon sight ye ag'in, by tossin' up thar head, an' throwin' the ha'r back. The ole bull that laid siege to me, he'd got me in jess this fix. 'Twar a stretch o' paraira, nigh to the Cimmaron, an' as I've sayed thar wa'n't enuff kiver on't to hev hid a rabbit. Rabbit? A snake kedn't 'a' foun' concealment in the grass, for the rezzen thar wa'n't no grass, ne'er a blade. It was a dirt plain, whitish, w' a thin coatin' o' soda, an' o' bushes or other vegetashun b'ar as the back o' your hand. Thar war grass 'bout half a mile off, but thar wa'n't no kiver, for it was set short by the paraira dogs thed hed thar town on it. An' it war them yarmints thed got me into the trouble."

"It kum about in this way: I war ridin' along 't'her side o' the dog-town when I spied a buffer headin' strait for me. I sed it war a ole bull, an' at first tho't he kedn't 'a' noticed me, from the ha'r hangin' over his face. I war glad o' the chance, for I war out o' meat, an' therefore expected soon to hev his tongue, or one o' his hump steaks atween my teeth. As he drawed nigher I no longer doubted o' his havin' sighted me an' my hoss, for twic' or three times he tossed up his front an' thar war his eyes glittin' like two coals o' fire. He war routin' too, an' 'now an' then diggin' up the paraira w' his hoofs."

"I now plainly purposed that the ole bull hed his dander up to the mad; an' on lookin' in the direckshun he war comin' from, I disklivered the rezzen. Thar was a black spot, which I knew to be another bull, an' it war clear they'd been hev'in a tussel; the defected anymal bein' no doubt the one kummin' my way."

"In coorse I hed no fear o' him—only glad o' the eazy chance fer approachin' him."

"I war mounted on a fast-rate horse, an' know'd I ked ride all roun' him, or away whenever I wanted to. So I pulled up, an' lookin' to my rifle, waited till he shed be nigh enough for a shot. I hedn't long to wait. When he got 'tithn 'bout a hundred and fifty yards he churged right at me. I put the bullet right inter his shoulder-blade; but it did no more to stop him than he'd been struck w' a snowball. Jerkin' my critter to one side an' stickin' the spur inter him, I made to git out the way. An' 'ud ezy 'a' done it but for a bit o' the crookedest luck thet man ever met on a paraira. W' all my eyes on the critter's buffer, I'd therefor tuk no notice o' a dog-hole that war thar jess whar the hoss war winched roun'. He put his fore-leg inter thet cursed hole, an' didn't git it out ag'in till this chile war throwed face foremost on the paraira; an' when he did git it out, I sed it war no longer o' emmy use fer takin' me out o' reach o' the buffer. It war broke jess above the passern joint. I heard the snap o' the bone, as I went over his ears."

"Afore I hed time to git to my feet, the buffer hed churged right onto him, an' whammed him over an' over, saddle an' all, rippin' inter his ribs with hoof an' horns. I sprawled about a bit myself; then got to my feet, an' put out as fast as legs ked carry me. I didn't know which way to run, fer thar wa'n't no way thet 'peared any better than the other. I hed hoped the buffer 'ud keep on buttin' at the hoss, an' let me git off unpursued. But I war makin' a big mistake 'bout thet ole bull; he wa'n't to be bamboozled in thet way. He 'peared to know it wa'n't the hoss hed g'n him the sting on his shoulder; an' afore I'd got two hundred yards I heard the lumber o' his gallop, an' sed he war kummin' arter."

"Young fellar, thar ain't miny men on these hyar parairas, eyther white or Injun, I kedn't beat on a foot run, but fr' all thet I know'd I war boun' to be overtuk by the buffer. An' I know'd, too, thet 'ud be the termination o' my life. I war bad skeert an' no mistake 'bout it. I tho't the time hed come fer this chile to go under. I may say I hed as good as g'n up; fer on glancin' back I sed the buffer war fast closin' on me, an' the two hundred yards o' start war already reduced to less'n a hundred. What war to be done? My rifle war empty, an' I hed no time to load it, even ef I hed 'a' been sure o' bringin' him down w' a shot. Thar war nothin' left but my knife, an' w' this, even the best o' bowies, thar ain't much chance in a skrimmage w' sech a beast as a

buffer-bull. I mout, as well 'a' tho't o' foun' the anymyle w' a darnin'-needle."

"I war at the height o' perplexity an' despair, when once more squintin' ahead, I spied somethin' risin' up over the paraira. It war a lump w' a sharpish top to it thet looked like a Injun tent, only thet it caved in roun' the bottom. It war o' a grayish white color, which hed hindered me from seein' it sooner, as the place war o' the same hue. Whatever it war I streaked on to it. As I got closer I purposed it war a rock, lyin' loose upon the paraira, as ef it hed been hurled down thar from the hevings above."

"Once more I squinted back at the buffer, and sed thar mout still be time to reach the rock. An' thar war jess time, w' not the shakin' o' a goat's tail to spare. As I speeled up the rock I ked feel the hot steam from the nostrils o' the bull puffin' ag'in the post-teerurs; an' in another second I'd 'a' feel'd the points o' his horns."

"Wal, young fellar, thet bit o' boulder saved me; tho' not till I'd sot upon it for over twenty-four mortal hours—'bout the longest ones this chile kin remember to hev spent upon a paraira. The top o' it didn't rise much over six feet above the groun'; but, as I've sayed, it war hollered out below, an' the bull, tho' he tried, kedn't git his snout near me, the much less his horns. I hed stuck to my gun, an' ye may wonder why I didn't reload and blaze away at him. But that's jess what spited me. I kedn't do it. In tumbelin' from my hoss, the strap o' my bullet-pouch hed caught on the horn of the saddle, an' pouch, bullets an' all war jerked off o' my shoulder. I didn't know it till arter I hed squatted on the rock."

"The buffer seein' he kedn't reach me, giv' up tryin' to climb the rock, as I hed hoped he mout come down from his anger, an' go away. Thar I war preciously mistuk 'bout the water o' the anymal. Heshowed neer a sign o' obsequatulin'; but, on the contrarywise, kept roamin' 'bout the rock, routin' like mad an' gorin' the dirt up w' his hoofs an' horns. At night, tho't I, he'd cool down, or ef he don't kin slip down an' steal away in the dark. Dark! It wa'n't my luck. Close arter sundown thar ruz up a moon, big as a wagon-wheel, thet shined all night as ef she war tryin' to equal the sun. An' all night the ole cuss kep' watchin' the rock an' me up on top o' it. Thar wa'n't the shadder o' a chance to git past him in any direckshun."

"I kep' awake all night. I dasent go to sleep. It war jess as much as I ked do to keep my balance on the rock, which wa'n't over twelve inches wide at the top. If I'd lost it I shed 'a' tumbled right down upon the horns o' the bull; an', thurfor, I tuk care to pursuave my equilibrium."

"Then mornin' kin ag'in the critter looked as fierce as ever, an' I reckin' a teetle more so from bein' kep' all night on the watch. Roun' an' roun' he marched, 'tarin' up the groun' an' makin' the dust fly till the bitter soda ruz up an' got inter my throat, well-nigh chokin' me. I war already sufferin' from thirst, but this made it ten times wuss, an' it grew wusser and wusser as the hot sun kin down over the white plains, scorchin' the rock on which I sot till I thought it 'ud 'a' roasted me."

"Wal, I stood it up to the hour o' noon an' perhaps a little arter. I hed no watch an' ain't sure o' the exact time, but somehow 'bout the middle o' the day an' idee kin inter my head that sumthin' must be done to git shet o' thet buffer-bull, tho' how I hedn't a ghost o' a guess. I tuk to thinkin', an' thar I think an' thunk an' thunk. I looked at my rifle. She wa'n't no good any more than a big stick, or a bar o' iron. The bowie war better, but still it w'dn't sarve, an' thar war nothin' else among this chile's 'countments 'ceptin' a powder-horn. I hed this, w' a pound o' Bent's best powder in it. But what war the use o' it 'thout bullets? Then I tho't o' usin' the ramrod for a bullet, or some o' the buttons on my close. I mout 'a' dud somethin' w' them; but then I remembered thet my caps war in the bullet-pouch. It war a preecushun gun, cuss 'em. They've sarved me that same trick more'n one't, whar a flint 'ud 'a' made things all right. 'Twar no use thinkin' o' the gun, an' I g'n it up."

"As good luck 'ud hev it, jess then thar flashed a tho't inter my brain-pan 'bout the powder, 's ef the powder hed been half set afore. Thet tho't war to make a spittin'-devil an' chuck it right at the head o' the buffer. It mout scare him off, or it moutn't. I knowed I ked ezy pitch it right inter him, for the best ievy now an' ag'in kin close up to the rock."

"Wal, I sot about concoctin' the devil. I poured the powder out inter the palm o' my hand, an' wetin' it w' aspitte, made a ball o' it. It war jess as much as I ked do to git sufficient spittle. Thar wa'n't hardly enuf sallerwashun from my laws to 'a' made dough out o' a biscuit. I chawed the blade o' my bowie to git sap out o' it."

"Arter working this way for nigh an hour, I got about half a pound o' the powder convarted inter a paste, an' bakin' this roun' the nipple-picker o' the gun, I hed a spittin'-devil w' a sharp point to it."

"I wa'n't dissappinted. Watchin' my opportunity, when the anymal kem close up to the rock, I struck my flint an' steel, sot fire to the devil, an' then launched it w' all my might straight for the face o' the buffer-bull."

"I hed the grater-cashun to see it strike right atween the horns, an' thar stick fast, sparkin' an' fizin' like the biggest kind o' a firework rocket."

"The bull made a start backwards, most throwin' himself from his feet, an' then w' a loud roar tossed his head inter the air, an' kep' tossin' it, thinkin' to git c'lar o' the thing that war stingin' him. But, it stuck like a arrow, an' not only stuck, but sot fire to the ha'r upon his skull, which war quick communicated to the long, shaggy wool o' his shoulders, an' afore I'd over his back."

"I've sed many a skeered critter in my time, but none more kumplect put out o' his senses than that ere buffer-bull. The way he tuk to his heels an' went off over the prairies, blazin' fizin' an' smokin' as he run, war a caution."

"For me I kep' on the rock watchin' the bull till he war nigh out o' sight, part hid by the smoke o' his burnin' wool, an' part by the dust he flinged up in retreatin'."

"Soon 's I sed he war fur enuf not to mind me any more, I slipped down, an' struck back to the dog-town."

"I foun' my hoss whar I hed left him, jess a-tyin' from the gore o' the buffer's horns. I reklivered my bullet-pouch with the caps, an' rammin' a ball inter the gun, put the poor anymal out o' pain."

"I hed over a hundred miles to fut it, afore reachin' Bent's fort on the Arkansas; but I got thar at last, sw'arin' never ag'in to stan' the attack o' a buffer-bull in the streets o' a paraira-dog town."

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Camp-Fire Yarns.

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

Besieged by a "Buffer" Bull.

A PRAIRIE REMINISCENCE.

"This chile's been treed by a grizzly b'ar, an' kep' roosted till these ole joints war like to git out, an' drop me right down into the critter's claws. 'Twa'n't a pleasant sitowatun no way ye kin take it; but I war on't in a preedickment w' a buffer-bull ekwilly unpleasant, if not a teetle more so, by the rezzen thet it lasted longer, for the grizzly giv me up shortly arter sundown—it war a she, an' I reckon hed to go home to her cubs—whar the buffer, bein' a ole bull, an' not havin' any family duty to tend to, stuck it out all night; an' as it war a moonlight, most as clear as day, w' not enuff kivi to g'n hidin' to a rabbit, I dasent shi away from the spot whar I war 'sieged."

"I war mounted on a fast-rate horse, an' know'd I ked ride all roun' him, or away whenever I wanted to. So I pulled up, an' lookin' to my rifle, waited till he shed be nigh enough for a shot. I hedn't long to wait. When he got 'tithn 'bout a hundred and fifty yards he churged right at me. I put the bullet right inter his shoulder-blade; but it did no more to stop him than he'd been struck w' a snowball. Jerkin' my critter to one side an' stickin' the spur inter him, I made to git out the way. An' 'ud ezy 'a' done it but for a bit o' the crookedest luck thet man ever met on a paraira. W' all my eyes on the critter's buffer, I'd therefor tuk no notice o' a dog-hole that war thar jess whar the hoss war winched roun'. He put his fore-leg inter thet cursed hole, an' didn't git it out ag'in till this chile war throwed face foremost on the paraira; an' when he did git it out, I sed it war no longer o' emmy use fer takin' me out o' reach o' the buffer. It war broke jess above the passern joint